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# THE PRINCETON SEMINARY BULLETIN

VOLUME XV, NUMBER 2 NEW SERIES 1994

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Males, and the Study of Patristics

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# Christianity and Culture, Dead White European Males, and the Study of Patristics

by KATHLEEN E. McVEY

*Kathleen E. McVey is the Joseph Ross Stevenson Professor of Church History at Princeton Theological Seminary. A graduate of Radcliffe College (B.A.) and Harvard University (Ph.D.), she is the author of two books, Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns on the Nativity, Hymns against Julian, Hymns on Virginity and on the Symbols of the Lord and George, Bishop of the Arabs: A Homily on Blessed Mar Severus, Patriarch of Antioch. Her inaugural lecture was given in Miller Chapel on March 16, 1994.*

WITH THE establishment of a professorship in honor of J. Ross Stevenson, the second president of Princeton Theological Seminary, and my appointment thereto, the Seminary has accorded a new level of recognition to the field of Early Church History or, as it has been traditionally known, Patristics. This is a momentous step ecumenically since this field has been most intensively studied and esteemed in the Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Anglican communions. Yet it is a field of study neither unfamiliar to nor unappreciated by Calvin and other great representatives of the Reformed tradition. I am honored to have been given the task of representing this field of study in the context of this distinguished seminary. It is a task I find both intimidating and exhilarating. It is intimidating because it is an area in which many great scholars have worked and taught—indeed in the context of European universities and theological faculties it is not one field of study but several: Latin, Greek, Syriac, Coptic, Arabic, and other languages and literatures of the early Christian period, each claiming its own exacting linguistic and literary expertise. It is exhilarating because I believe that this area of study is particularly relevant to the issues facing us today, and I believe that the growing interest of seminary students in this subject constitutes a recognition of its importance to the church of the future.

## I. DEAD WHITE EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN MALES AND THE STUDY OF THE EARLY CHURCH

It is this issue of the relevance of the study of the early church to the questions and concerns of our contemporary world that will be the focal point of today's lecture. Indeed, some of you may be wondering whether you misheard me on this point. After all, Ficino, Erasmus, Calvin, and the other Renaissance humanists who applied themselves to the study of the Church Fathers did so as part of a general return to the literature and

culture of Greece and Rome. But it could scarcely be said that their cry "*ad fontes*"—to the sources!—is a popular slogan today. Throughout the educational establishment the question is being raised whether there should be any "canon" of authors. In the study of literature, history, and philosophy, students and educators alike are questioning the hegemony of "classical" curricula of any sort in the multicultural environment of the late-twentieth-century university. One prominent classicist, Bernard Knox, has pointedly defended the study of the traditional Greco-Roman classics in a book provocatively entitled, *The Oldest Dead White European Males and Other Reflections on the Classics*.<sup>1</sup> In the setting of Princeton Theological Seminary you might well ask me, "Is not Patristics actually the study of the writings of 'the oldest dead white European *Christian* males?'"

This is not a frivolous question. Let us briefly consider each of its components, but in reverse order under the rubric of a tripartite question: "Is the study of Patristics merely the examination of writings of Christian males, who were white Europeans, and are now dead?"

First, the very name of the discipline, Patristics or Patrology, bespeaks the formative role of certain men, the "Fathers" of the church, in defining "Orthodox" Christian truth and formulating "Catholic" tradition.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the omission not only of women but also of heretical writers is assumed, and certainly only Christians are under consideration. More recently scholars have enlarged this understanding to "include both orthodox and heretical writers" without changing the designation of the discipline as Patristics.<sup>3</sup> Justification of the expansion of the definition of the field in this manner has been that the orthodox can hardly be understood without studying their heterodox predecessors and contemporaries. More recently an extension of the same logic has brought the Coptic Gnostic documents into the purview of the student of Patristics, but without extending the name of "Church Father" to their authors. The implied criterion, though I have never seen it made explicit, is that the official church contemporaneous with the individual Christian writer (rather than the fourth-century or later definitions) is now the judge of admission to Church Fatherhood.

<sup>1</sup> Bernard Knox, *The Oldest Dead White European Males and Other Reflections on the Classics* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1993).

<sup>2</sup> For a basic discussion, see Johannes Quasten, *Patrology*, 4 vols. (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1983-86), 1:1-12; and J. N. D. Kelly, "Patristic Literature," in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15 ed., 30 vols. (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1977), Macropaedia 13:1077-1087. For further bibliography on "The Concept and History of Patrology" and the notion of "The 'Fathers' of the Church," see Thomas P. Halton and Robert D. Sider, "A Decade of Patristic Scholarship, 1970-1979," vol. 1, *The Classical World* 76 (1982): 67-68.

<sup>3</sup> Quasten, *Patrology*, 1:1.

It is clear, then, that the doctrinal content of the title "Fathers" of the church has been somewhat attenuated. Implicit historical criteria for inclusion—namely, a formative influence on the development of Christianity—has gradually eroded the original theological criterion, one that focused unduly and ahistorically on orthodoxy as defined by the fourth- and fifth-century councils.

To us today, more obvious than the question of the implied orthodoxy of the Fathers of the church is their implied maleness. Thus we readily wonder about the possibility of Mothers of the church in parallel with them, and we ponder the limitations of their doctrinal formulations as well as of their social ethics due to the sexism of their cultural assumptions. Although the names of potential Church Mothers are few, some do come to mind: Paula, Melania, Olympias, Macrina—friends, intellectual companions, financial supporters, and spiritual guides to some of the indisputably orthodox Fathers of the fourth century.<sup>4</sup> Women's writings, though sparse, do survive: the *Passion* of Perpetua and Felicity, the *Cento* of Proba, Egeria's *Diary of a Pilgrimage*, and Eudocia's account of St. Cyprian's martyrdom.<sup>5</sup> The sayings of a few desert mothers were preserved in the traditional collections of *Apophthegmata Patrum*: the Ammas Theodora, Sarah, and Syncletica.<sup>6</sup> The life stories of some early Christian women are extant, though they are fraught with the usual difficulties of hagiography: the *Vitae* of Macrina,

<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth A. Clark, *Women in the Early Church*, Message of the Fathers of the Church 13 (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1983), esp. 204-258; idem, *Jerome, Chrysostom, and Friends: Essays and Translations*, 2 ed. (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1982).

<sup>5</sup> These are presented together in English translation by Patricia Wilson-Kastner et al., *A Lost Tradition: Women Writers of the Early Church* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1981). For the primary texts of: 1) Perpetua, see Herbert Musurillo, ed., *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), xxv-xxvii, 106-131; 2) Egeria, see Pierre Maraval, ed., *Égérie: Journal de Voyage*, Sources chrétiennes 296 (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1982); other translations by John Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels* (London: SPCK, 1971); idem, *Jerusalem Pilgrimage before the Crusades* (Warminster, England: Aris & Phillips, 1977); and George Gingras, *Egeria: Diary of a Pilgrimage*, Ancient Christian Writers 38 (New York: Newman Press, 1970); 3) Eudocia, see Arthur Ludwig, ed., *Eudociae Augustae Procli Lycii Clandiani Carminum Graecorum Reliquiae*, Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana 1 (Leipzig: Teubner Verlagsgesellschaft, 1897), 16-79; for fragments of other works attributed to Eudocia, see *ibid.*, 11-16, 79-114; 4) Proba, see Elizabeth A. Clark and Diane F. Hatch, *The Golden Bough, The Oak Leaf Cross: The Virgilian Cento of Faltonia Betitia Proba*, American Academy of Religion Texts and Translations 5 (Chico: Scholars Press, 1981).

<sup>6</sup> See J.-P. Migne, ed. *Patrologia Cursus Completus, Series Latina*, 221 vols. (Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1844-77), 65:201B-203C, 419C-427B [hereafter cited as MPG]; supplemented by Jean-Claude Guy, *Recherches sur la tradition grecque des Apophthegmata Patrum*, Subsidia Hagiographica 36 (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1962), 22-23, 34-35, 37-38, 44, 47-48, et passim. See also Benedicta Ward, trans., *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers: The Alphabetical Collection*, Cistercian Studies 59 (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1975), 71-72, 192-197. For recent bibliography and discussion, see Douglas Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert: Scripture and the Quest for Holiness in Early Christian Monasticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), passim.

Melania the Younger, Mary and Pelagia the harlots, the Persian martyrs Martha, Tarbo, Thecla, and Anahid, the South Arabian martyrs Elizabeth the deaconess, Tahna, Ummah, and others, and the *Acts* of Thecla.<sup>7</sup> A few powerful empresses exerted theological leadership especially during the christological controversies: Eudoxia, Pulcheria, Eudocia, and Theodora.<sup>8</sup> Women's roles as deaconesses, monastic leaders, and in even more significant formal, ordained leadership are attested in sources that promise an ongoing scholarly debate.<sup>9</sup> Yet compared with the ample documentation of the collective theological mind of their male counterparts, the direct sources for women's theological views and spiritual experience are meagre indeed. Retrieving the female dimension of the early Christian experience will not consist principally in a simple or straightforward task of publishing heretofore unnoticed sources. Even more than the retrieval of the experience of those deemed heretical, this task will involve critical hermeneutical strategies and cross-disciplinary approaches. But in answer to our first query, we can affirm that men whose views are orthodox according to the standards of Nicea and Chalcedon are not the sole objects of study in early church history today.

Secondly, we ask, "Were the Fathers of the church white and European?" There is no question that Greco-Roman classical literature was formative for European civilization. But it should be noted that it is less obvious that

<sup>7</sup> For Macrina, see Pierre Maraval, ed., *Grégoire de Nysse: Vie de Sainte Macrine*, Sources chrétiennes 178 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1971); English translation by W. K. Louth Clarke, *St. Gregory of Nyssa: The Life of St. Macrina* (London: SPCK, 1916). For Melania, see Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Life of Melania the Younger: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, Studies in Women and Religion 14 (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1984); for the Greek text, see Denys Gorce, *Vie de Sainte Mélanie*, Sources chrétiennes 90 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1962). For Sts. Pelagia and Mary, see Helen Waddell, *The Desert Fathers* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1957), 173-202; Susan A. Harvey and Sebastian Brock, *Holy Women of the Syrian Orient* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), esp. 27-62. For the Persian and South Arabian women as well as others from the Syriac tradition, see *ibid.*, 63-181. For Thecla, see Gilbert Dagron, ed., *Vie et miracles de Sainte Thècle: Texte grec, traduction et commentaire*, Subsidia Hagiographica 62 (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1978).

<sup>8</sup> Kenneth Holum, *Theodosian Empresses: Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982); Charles Diehl, *Theodora Empress of Byzantium*, trans. S. R. Rosenbaum (New York: F. Ungar Publishing Co., 1972); Antony Bridge, *Theodora: Portrait in a Byzantine Landscape* (London: Cassell, 1978); Robert Browning, *Justinian and Theodora*, rev. ed. (New York: Thames & Hudson, 1987), esp. 38-74, 104-147, 160-172, et passim. For more on Theodora's role in the christological controversies, see William H. C. Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement: Chapters in the History of the Church in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 255-315 passim.

<sup>9</sup> The principal sources are gathered in English translation and discussed by Roger Gryson, *The Ministry of Women in the Early Church*, trans. Jean Laporte and Mary Louise Hall (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1976).



those who composed it should be considered "Europeans."<sup>10</sup> This is not an epithet they ever applied to themselves; nor was the idea of "Europe" as a clearly defined geographic and cultural entity in existence until the medieval period. Beginning with the confrontation with Islam, a notion of Christendom emerged, and the geographic area in which it was assumed to be confined was essentially what we would call Europe, but only in the fifteenth and subsequent centuries was it called by that name by its inhabitants; only in the sixteenth century did they begin to use the adjective "European" and subsequently still to designate themselves as "Europeans."<sup>11</sup>

It is even more doubtful that we should think of the Fathers of the church as Europeans. For they hailed not from Paris, London, Mainz, and Rome, but rather from such places as Carthage, Alexandria, Jerusalem, Edessa in Osrhoene, Caesarea in Cappadocia, and Rome. If we search for a cultural umbrella for them it would be "Hellenized Mediterranean" sooner than the anachronistic "European." Their native languages and corresponding ethnic identities are diverse.

Although the racial identities of the early Christian writers are for the most part unknown, scholars have with few exceptions assumed them to be "white."<sup>12</sup> The occasional but relentlessly stereotypical use of Ethiopians to represent the "blackness" of sin over against the "whiteness" of virtue would seem to affirm the validity of that assumption, at least in the case of those such as Origen and Ambrose whose invocations of this cliché survive.<sup>13</sup> But its adoption even by the desert father, Moses the Black, also known as

<sup>10</sup> Pace Knox, *European Males*, 26.

<sup>11</sup> Denys Hay, *Europe: The Emergence of an Idea*, rev. ed. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1968), esp. xv-xxi, 96-116.

<sup>12</sup> On the possibility that Monica, Augustine's mother, was of Berber or Libyan background, see William Frend, *The Donatist Church: A Movement of Protest in Roman North Africa*, 3d. rev. impression (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 230-231. For more on the relation of the Berber and Libyan languages, see idem, "A Note on the Berber Background in the Life of St. Augustine," *Journal of Theological Studies* 43 (1942): 188-191; and other literature listed by Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 22 n. 2.

<sup>13</sup> Early Christian attitudes toward blackness are included in a broader discussion of this issue in antiquity by Frank M. Snowden, Jr., *Blacks in Antiquity: Ethiopians in the Greco-Roman Experience* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Belknap Press, 1970), esp. 196-218; again, more briefly, in idem, *Before Color Prejudice: The Ancient View of Blacks* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 99-108. Snowden's argument against the existence of color prejudice in antiquity is modified importantly by Peter Frost, "Attitudes toward Blacks in the Early Christian Era," *The Second Century* 8 (1991): 1-11. On "blackness" in the Syriac tradition, see Shafiq AbouZayd, *Ibidayutha: A Study of the Life of Singleness in the Syrian Orient from Ignatius of Antioch to Chalcedon 451 A.D.* (Oxford: ARAM Society for Syro-Mesopotamian Studies, 1993), 186-187.

Moses the Ethiopian, warns us against drawing too facile an inference. For the traditional stories associated with his name include an account of his ordination to the priesthood, when a white vestment was put on him, and the archbishop observed, "See Abba Moses, now you are entirely white." To this Moses himself replies, "It is true of the outside, lord and father, but what about Him who sees the inside?"—apparently accepting the implied identification of whiteness with sinlessness.<sup>14</sup>

In a similar vein, Amma Sarah is said to have defended herself when challenged by "two old men, great anchorites" who warned her, "Be careful not to become conceited, thinking to yourself: 'Look how anchorites are coming to see me, a mere woman.'" She answers: "According to nature I am a woman, but not according to my thoughts." Certain manuscripts add that she also said to her male colleagues, "I am a man; you are women!"<sup>15</sup> Both Moses and Sarah accept the outward identification of "white" or "male" with excellence, yet both redirect the conversation to an inward, spiritual level to claim, at least implicitly, that they are equally or possibly even better qualified to advance in this realm. Although neither directly rejects the stereotype, then, their rejoinders add impetus to the shift from the literal to the allegorical sense of white versus black and of male versus female—a shift that is already implied by the stereotype itself. Their remarks give emphasis to a common human nature and a common spiritual calling that transcends race, sex, and other external bodily conditions. Thus their testimony is potentially a source of social transformation.<sup>16</sup>

Yet another story about Abba Moses directly attests the existence of racial prejudice and its apparent acceptance by him. Taunted and expelled from a council at Scetis by his fellow monks on the grounds that "a black man" should not be there, he was said to have been asked if "that did not grieve [him] at all?" His answer was, "I was grieved, but I kept silence."<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> MPG 65:284A-B; cf. Guy, *Recherches*, 27, et passim; Ward, *Sayings*, 117-118. These incidents are also discussed by Snowden, *Blacks*, 209-211; idem, *Before Color*, 106; and Frost, "Attitudes," 5-6.

<sup>15</sup> MPG 65:420D. On her additional comment, see Guy, *Recherches*, 34; and Ward, *Sayings*, 193.

<sup>16</sup> Significant attention has been given to the transformative aspect of viewing women as able to "become male" through asceticism. For example, see Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Mothers of the Church: Ascetic Women in the Late Patristic Age," in *Women of Spirit: Female Leadership in the Jewish and Christian Traditions*, ed. Rosemary Radford Ruether and Eleanor McLaughlin (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1979), 71-98; Clark, *Women*, esp. 115-155; idem, *Ascetic Piety and Women's Faith: Essays on Late Ancient Christianity* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1986); and Virginia Burrus, *Chastity as Autonomy: Women in the Stories of the Apocryphal Acts* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1987). On the potential use of allegory as a means of social transformation, see David Dawson, *Allegorical Readers and Cultural Revision in Ancient Alexandria* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 17-21, et passim.

<sup>17</sup> See n. 14 above.

The vital but perhaps unanswerable question is, how was this story read by the Christians who preserved it? Was Moses an example of resignation peculiarly appropriate to a person of color? Or was he an example of how any Christian was expected to respond to the taunts of sinful people? Was the listener meant to feel compunction for his or her own racial prejudices? These questions may not admit of resolution, but I am confident that they will receive more attention in the future study of Patristics than they have in the past.

The early Christian literature also provides clear examples of people of color whose lives, sayings, and spiritual accomplishment were held in esteem. Moses the Black was recognized for his spiritual insight and exemplary reluctance to pass judgment on others.<sup>18</sup> These were the goals of all persons in the desert—whether male or female, black or white, educated or peasant. And the name of Abgar Ukkama, Abgar “the Black,” and the story of his legendary correspondence with Jesus, although obscure to many modern Christians, was well known throughout the history of Christianity in the Syriac-speaking sphere, and from the time of Eusebius it became increasingly familiar in the Greco-Latin Christian world as well.<sup>19</sup>

So while the Patristic literature could not readily be described as a collection of writings by black African Christians, it is less evident than it initially seemed that it should be considered the peculiar property of white Europeans. Contemporary scholarly currents continue to shift the center of gravity away from Europe and toward Africa and Asia. Increasingly the Coptic and Syriac Christian literatures and their cultural and social environments command the attention of the historian of the early church—even if they still have not achieved the normative status of their Greek and Latin counterparts. They represent a wedge, the proverbial “foot in the door,” behind which their Armenian, Ethiopian, Georgian, Arabic, and Old Church Slavonic counterparts patiently wait. This is not, I think, a faddish nod toward “globalization” but a belated recognition of the limitations of earlier approaches.

Finally, we turn to our third question, “Are the Patristic writers dead?” This goes to the very heart of the question of relevance. On the literal level we can hardly get around the fact that the Church Fathers certainly are no longer among the living. But, of course, that does not exhaust the issue.

<sup>18</sup> MPG 65:281C-289C; cf. Guy, *Recherches*, 27, 45, 51, et passim; Ward, *Sayings*, 117-121; cf. Snowden, *Blacks*, 209-211; idem, *Before Color*, 106.

<sup>19</sup> For the basic literature, see Kathleen E. McVey, “Abgar, Epistle of Christ to,” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman, 6 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1:12-13.

The claim has been that their writings, like those of Homer, Plato, Livy, Horace, and Virgil, have enduring relevance to the human condition. Today this traditional view encounters many of the same difficulties that face its classical counterpart. For Patristics or Patrology designates the study of the Fathers of the Christian church, as the classical literature of the Christian tradition. It is classical in two senses: first, it reflects the "classical" literature of Greece and Rome, and, second, it can claim to be "classic," thus possessing an authority that transcends temporal and cultural boundaries.

If we consider first the idea of Patristics as the sibling discipline to the Greek and Latin literature, it is increasingly clear that early church scholarship has been departing from that definition for some time. Some degree of acquaintance with New Testament scholarship as well as with current trends in the study of Hellenistic Judaism are necessary to the student of post-New Testament Christianity. Moreover, it is not only the Greek and Latin literature or only the Roman Empire that provides the broader context for the study of early Christianity. For the speakers of Syriac, Arabic, and Armenian were both within and without the Roman borders. At an early date Syriac-speaking Christians made their way into the Persian Empire and beyond, sending the first missions to China.<sup>20</sup> They, along with the first Indian Christians, staked their claim to apostolicity through Thomas—a claim based on sources roughly equivalent in dating and reliability to those that bolster the Petrine claim for Roman apostolicity, more familiar to Western Christians.<sup>21</sup> The Ethiopian Church also traces its roots to the

<sup>20</sup> For the basic literature on Christians in Persia, see Susan A. Harvey, "Persia," in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, ed. Everett Ferguson et al. (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1990), 717-718. Further on the mission to central Asia and China, see Wolfgang Hage, *Syriac Christianity in the East*, Moran 'Eth'o Series 1 (Kerala, India: St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute, 1988); and Samuel Hugh Moffett, *A History of Christianity in Asia*, vol. 1, *Beginnings to 1500* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992), esp. 285-323.

<sup>21</sup> *The Acts of Thomas* portray the apostle's mission to India and his martyrdom there. Its date, place of origin, original language, and theological provenience are disputed. For an English translation and discussion of the Syriac version with an argument for its priority over the Greek as well as its Jewish-Christian encratite rather than Gnostic character, see A. F. J. Klijn, *The Acts of Thomas: Introduction, Text, Commentary*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum 5 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1962). For an English translation of the Greek text and an argument for its priority and hence its originally Gnostic character, see Günther Bornkamm, "The Acts of Thomas," in *New Testament Apocrypha*, ed. Edgar Hennecke, Wilhelm Schneemelcher, and R. McL. Wilson, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963-65), 2:425-531. Arguing the validity of the tradition of Thomas' mission, death, and burial in India is Moffett, *Beginnings*, esp. 24-44. For other traditions of Thomas' death and burial place, see Frederick W. Norris, "Acts of Thomas," in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 11-12; and Kathleen E. McVey, *Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns* (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 25-26. The most comprehensive critical study of Petrine tradition in Rome is: Daniel W. O'Connor, *Peter in Rome: The Literary, Liturgical, and Archeological Evidence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969).



apostolic period, founding its claim in references within the canonical New Testament Book of Acts; the existence and rapid growth of the Ethiopian Christian community are firmly attested in fourth- through sixth-century sources.<sup>22</sup> In the case of the Armenian Church, too, both traditional founding by Gregory the Illuminator and incontrovertible historical evidence fall well within the Patristic period.<sup>23</sup>

So we may imagine ourselves a bit like Augustine pondering the sack of Rome. Just as his early Christian ancestors had sometimes apologetically linked the appearance of Christianity to the *Pax Romana* and claimed the guidance of Providence for both, our scholarly ancestors linked the study of Patristics to the rising star of Classics. Now as we witness Greek and Latin moving away from the center of the Euro-American educational curriculum, we may wonder whether we ought to help salvage them or whether it is time to rethink the relation of Christianity to the Greco-Roman and, adoptively, the European intellectual tradition. For us, as for Augustine in composing the *City of God*, the second option can hardly be a matter of making a clean break but rather one of pondering deeply the meaning of our history as Christians.

Even more difficult to evaluate is the claim that the Patristic literature poses fundamental human questions and answers them in a manner that never ceases to be relevant. This could scarcely be done in a single paper, but in the time remaining today I propose to address one aspect of this issue, namely, a question central to Christians in every time and place: the relation between Christianity and culture. For the early church was the context in which this fundamental question was raised both implicitly and explicitly for the first time.

## II. CHRISTIANITY AND CULTURE: TERTULLIAN AND CLEMENT REVISITED

Virtually all the extant early Christian writings offer evidence of their authors' own personal dances of accommodation to their respective cultural environments. But two writers stand out for directly stating a theoretical position with regard to Christianity and culture. They are Tertullian of Carthage and Clement of Alexandria. Let us now turn to them.

<sup>22</sup> Monica Blanchard, "Ethiopia," in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 318-319. Cf. also, Marilyn Heldman, "Ethiopia," in *Encyclopedia of Early Christian Art and Archeology*, ed. Paul Corby Finney (New York: Garland, forthcoming).

<sup>23</sup> For a critical analysis of the earliest traditions, see Agathangelos, *History of the Armenians*, trans. and commentary by Robert W. Thomson (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1976). For further basic literature, see Claude Cox, "Armenia," in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 95-96.

*A. Tertullian and Clement as Polar Opposites*

Tertullian and Clement have long been invoked to represent two extremes: the one, rejection of, and the other, accommodation to their Greco-Roman cultural environment. For H. Richard Niebuhr in *Christ and Culture* Tertullian is the prototypical Christian "against culture."<sup>24</sup> For others he is also the irrational fideist who chooses Christ over reason.<sup>25</sup> At first glance—for better or for worse—he seems to deserve these labels. His diatribe against philosophy is well known:

What then has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What has the academy to do with the church? What have heretics to do with Christians? Our instruction is from the porch of Solomon, who himself handed down that the Lord is to be sought in simplicity of heart. Away with those who produce a Stoic, Platonic, and dialectic Christianity. We have no need of curiosity after [we have] Christ Jesus, nor of inquisitiveness after [we have] the gospel! Since we believe, we desire nothing else to believe. For the first thing we believe is that there is nothing else we ought to believe.<sup>26</sup>

Clement of Alexandria, by contrast, takes a more positive view of Greek culture: "Our treatise," he says of his *Stromateis*, "will not hesitate to make use of the best of philosophy and other introductory teaching." Next he cites Paul to support his point of view:

For not only for the Hebrews and those subject to the law, according to the apostle, is it right to become a Jew, but also a Greek for the Greeks, that we may gain all [cf. 1 Cor. 9:20-21]. Also in the Epistle to the Colossians [Col. 1:28], he writes, "Warning and teaching everyone in all wisdom that we may present everyone perfect in Christ."<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1951), 45-82, esp. 51-55.

<sup>25</sup> E.g., see Henry Chadwick, *Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), 1-2. For a host of similar misquotations and misrepresentations, see Robert H. Ayers, *Language, Logic and Reason in the Church Fathers: A Study of Tertullian, Augustine and Aquinas*, *Altertumswissenschaftliche Texte und Studien* 6 (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1979), 8-9, nn. 9, 10, 12. To these may be added Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (New York: Random House, 1979), 5.

<sup>26</sup> "Quid ergo Athenis et Hierosolymis? quid academiae et ecclesiae? quid haereticis et christianis? Nostra institutio de porticu Solomonis est qui et ipse tradiderat Dominum in simplicitate cordis esse quaerendum. Viderint qui Stoicum et Platonium et dialecticum christianismum protulerunt. Nobis curiositate opus non est post Christum Iesum nec inquisitione post euangelium [sic, lege: euangelium]. Cum credimus nihil desideramus ultra credere. Hoc enim prius credimus non esse quod ultra credere debeamus." *De praescriptione haereticorum* 7.9-13 (*Quinti Septimi Florentis Tertulliani Opera*, part 1, *Opera Catbolica; Adversus Marcionem*, *Corpus Christianorum*, Series Latina 1 [Turnholt: Typographi Brepols Editores Pontificii, 1954], 193).

<sup>27</sup> *Strom.* 1.1.15.3-5. Unless otherwise noted, Clement's texts will be cited in Stählin's edition:

Clement continues with an argument for a selective use of Greek learning:

All of us who use our eyes consider what encounters them. But some look for one reason, others for another. For example, the cook and the shepherd do not consider the sheep alike. For the former scrutinizes whether it is fat; the latter looks into the quality of its breeding. If someone needs food, let him milk the sheep. Let him shear the wool if he needs clothing. In this way, let me benefit from the fruit of Greek erudition.<sup>28</sup>

Thus these two early Christian writers seem to hold diametrically opposed attitudes toward culture. As a consequence, they have been made to represent an antinomy of West versus East, orthodox rigidity versus slightly heterodox liberalism.<sup>29</sup>

### B. A More Nuanced View of Tertullian and Clement

Closer examination demonstrates that they do not represent quite such extremes.<sup>30</sup> Recent scholarship reveals a new Tertullian, who is neither an

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Otto Stählin, ed., *Clemens Alexandrinus*, vols. 1-3, Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte 12 (3d ed., ed. Ursula Treu [Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1972]); 15 (2d ed., ed. Ludwig Früchtel [Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1960]); 17 (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1909). Where a translation has not been cited, the quotations from Clement in this paper are my translations. I have benefitted by consulting the available English and French translations: William Wilson, trans., "Exhortation to the Heathen," "The Instructor," and "Stromata or Miscellanies," by Clement of Alexandria, in *Fathers of the Second Century*, The Ante-Nicene Fathers 2 (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951), 163-568; Simon P. Wood, trans., *Clement of Alexandria: Christ the Educator*, The Fathers of the Church 23 (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1954); John Ferguson, trans., *Clement of Alexandria: Stromateis, Books One to Three*, The Fathers of the Church 85 (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1991); Claude Mondésert with André Plassart, trans. and ed., *Clément d'Alexandrie: Le Protrep-tique*, 3d ed., Sources chrétiennes 2 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1976); Marguerite Harl, trans., Henri-Irénée Marrou, notes, *Clément d'Alexandrie: Le Pédagogue, Livre I*, Sources chrétiennes 70 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1960); Claude Mondésert, trans., Henri-Irénée Marrou, notes, *Clément d'Alexandrie: Le Pédagogue, Livre II*, Sources chrétiennes 108 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1965); Claude Mondésert and Chantal Matray, trans., Henri-Irénée Marrou, notes, *Clément d'Alexandrie: Le Pédagogue, Livre III*, Sources chrétiennes 158 (Paris: Éditions de Cerf, 1970); Claude Mondésert, intro., Marcel Caster, trans. and notes, *Clément d'Alexandrie: Les Stromates: Stromate I*, Sources chrétiennes 30 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1951); P. Th. Camelot, intro. and notes, Claude Mondésert, trans., *Clément d'Alexandrie: Les Stromates: Stromate II*, Sources chrétiennes 38 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1954).

<sup>28</sup> *Strom.* 1.1.1.17-1-2.

<sup>29</sup> Charles Bigg, *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1886), esp. 36-54; Einar Molland, "Clement of Alexandria on the Origin of Greek Philosophy," *Symbolae Osloenses* 15/16 (1936): 57-85, esp. 57; Eric F. Osborn, *The Philosophy of Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957), 122.

<sup>30</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, vol. 1, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 55-67; Eric F. Osborn, "Reason and the Rule of Faith in the Second Century, A.D.," in *The Making of Orthodoxy*, ed. Rowan Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 40-61.

antirational fideist nor a simple literalist in his reading of scripture.<sup>31</sup> Although he fulminates mightily on the omnipresence of idolatrous temptation in daily life, he is no longer viewed as a straightforward opponent of Greco-Roman culture in all its aspects.<sup>32</sup> Despite his apparent principled opposition to the use of philosophy, Stoic notions pervade his theology.<sup>33</sup> Rhetoric, the pivotal element of the Greco-Roman educational system, and perhaps Rome's most essential cultural vehicle, is central to his treatises. Features of his writing once attributed to his putative profession of law are now more likely to be studied under the rubric of the rhetoric of the Second Sophistic.<sup>34</sup>

In the face of this evidence one might argue that when he set Athens in opposition to Jerusalem, Tertullian meant to exclude not all philosophical discourse but only the Middle Platonism that newly reigned in some sophisticated intellectual circles of his time. Or perhaps he merely set philosophy over against rhetoric in the manner of traditional sophistic debate. What is clear is that he does not explain in accurate fashion his stance with respect to Roman culture. For he exploits and elaborates the very thing he proposes to reject. He selects from Greco-Roman culture, especially from Stoicism, and from the rhetoricians and historians of Latin literary tradition, those elements that he finds compatible with Christianity. Since the procedure he actually follows fails to correspond to what he claims to espouse, his writings offer, after all, only implicit answers to the question of Christianity and culture.

<sup>31</sup> On fideism, see J. L. González, "Athens and Jerusalem Revisited: Reason and Authority in Tertullian," *Church History* 43 (1974): 17-25; Ayers, *Language*, 7-60; and L. Wm. Countryman, "Tertullian and the Regula Fidei," in *The Second Century* 2 (1982): 208-227; cf. Halton and Sider, "Decade," 120-121. On scripture, see J. H. Waszink, "Tertullian's Principles and Methods of Exegesis," in *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition: In honorem Robert M. Grant*, ed. William R. Schoedel and Robert L. Wilken, *Théologie Historique* 53 (Paris: Éditions Beauchesne, 1979), 17-31.

<sup>32</sup> For an argument that Tertullian's use of philosophy and rhetoric is a reluctant, gradual response to heretical arguments, see Joseph Moingt, *Théologie trinitaire de Tertullien*, 4 vols. (Paris: Éditions Aubier-Montaigne, 1966-69), esp. 1:146-160. Over against the more "separatist" traditional portrayal of Robert F. Evans, *One and Holy: The Church in Latin Patristic Thought* (London: SPCK, 1972), 4-35, cf. instead Timothy D. Barnes, *Tertullian: A Historical and Literary Study*, 2d ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985).

<sup>33</sup> J. H. Waszink, ed., *Quinti Septimi Florentis Tertulliani De Anima* (Amsterdam: J. M. Meulenhoff, 1947); R. Braun, *Deus Christianorum: Recherches sur le vocabulaire doctrinal de Tertullien* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1962), esp. 167-242; Ayers, *Language*, esp. 24-34; Marcia Colish, *The Stoic Tradition from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*, 2 vols. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990), 2:9-29.

<sup>34</sup> On Tertullian's rhetoric, see Robert D. Sider, *Ancient Rhetoric and the Art of Tertullian*, Oxford Theological Monographs (London: Oxford University Press, 1971); and Barnes, *Tertullian*. On the Second Sophistic, see Glen W. Bowersock, *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).



Clement, too, has been the subject of intensive scholarly scrutiny.<sup>35</sup> Newly emergent emphases include fuller attention to the pervasiveness of his antiheretical, specifically anti-Gnostic polemic, and his notion of a "dialectic of faith and knowledge."<sup>36</sup> Study of Clement's apologetic arguments shows that he follows the tradition established by the earlier Greek apologists in sharply distinguishing traditional Greek polytheism from Greek philosophy. In contrast to the more nuanced and respectful treatment of Greek philosophy, the myths of the gods and the worship of their images are mercilessly ridiculed and condemned.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, his use of historical polemics, specifically the convention of "barbarian wisdom," locates him in the company of the apologists Tatian and Theophilus as well as Justin.<sup>38</sup> His general philosophical eclecticism as well as many of his specific philosophical views have been brought clearly under the umbrella of Middle Platonism.<sup>39</sup> In his allegorical reading of scripture Clement has been set into carefully nuanced comparison with his pagan counterparts, Cornutus, Heraclitus, and Plutarch, as well as with Philo, Valentinus, and Justin to mount a persuasive argument that his goal was cultural transformation, not accommodation.<sup>40</sup>

With allowance made for rhetorical excess, all this scholarly energy has reduced to a more bridgeable gap the apparent chasm between Tertullian and Clement. Both admit the use of reason in the elaboration of Christian faith. Neither is a simple literalist in the appropriation of scripture. Both wrote extensive antiheretical treatises, opposing many of the same figures and groups, for example, Marcion, Valentinus, and their followers. Both

<sup>35</sup> Eric F. Osborn, "Clement of Alexandria: A Review of Research, 1958-1982," *The Second Century* 3 (1983): 219-244. Important more recent work includes: Thomas Halton, "Clement's Lyre: A Broken String, a New Song," *The Second Century* 3 (1983): 177-199; Arthur J. Droge, *Homer or Moses? Early Christian Interpretations of the History of Culture*, Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie 26 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1989), esp. 124-152; and Dawson, *Allegorical Readers*, esp. 183-234.

<sup>36</sup> Eric F. Osborn, "Reason," 40-61, esp. 51-53.

<sup>37</sup> Paul Corby Finney, *The Invisible God: The Earliest Christians on Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), esp. chaps. 2-3.

<sup>38</sup> J. H. Waszink, "Some Observations on the Appreciation of 'the Philosophy of the Barbarians' in Early Christian Literature," in *Mélanges offerts à Mademoiselle Christine Mobermann*, ed. L. J. Engels, H. W. F. M. Hoppenbrouwers, and A. J. Vermeulen (Utrecht: Spectrum Editeurs, 1963), 41-56; Droge, *Homer or Moses?*; Raoul Mortley, "L'historiographie profane et les Pères" in *Paganisme, Judaïsme, Christianisme: Influences et affrontements dans le monde antique: Mélanges offerts à Marcel Simon*, ed. André Benoit, Marc Philonenko, and Cyrille Vogel (Paris: Éditions E. de Boccard, 1978), 315-327.

<sup>39</sup> Salvatore R. C. Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria: A Study in Christian Platonism and Gnosticism*, Oxford Theological Monographs (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), esp. 41-51.

<sup>40</sup> Dawson, *Allegorical Readers*, esp. 23-72, 183-234.

attack traditional polytheism and image worship. Yet both allow for the presence of religious truth beyond the confines of the Christian community, and by the use of the ideas of the logos and natural law, respectively, they lay the foundation for later theories that grace and salvation are not restricted to ancient Israel and the Christian church.<sup>41</sup> Both appropriate philosophical doctrines to formulate Christian teachings—in Tertullian's case Stoicism, in Clement's Middle Platonism.

But a significant contrast lurks in their divergent choices of philosophical allegiance. While Clement's Middle Platonism incorporates a great deal of Stoic teaching, the latter has been thoroughly subordinated in a manner that has implications especially for the doctrine of God, for the formulation of the goal of human life, and for the manner of reading scripture (and other sources) to discern the way to that goal. Each of these aspects of Clement's theology is intimately related to his understanding of Christ as Logos. Through this doctrine these essential elements of Christian theology are also connected with a culturally inclusive vision. Unlike Tertullian whose actual method fails to match his theoretical pronouncements, Clement maintains consistency between his theoretical and actual attitudes toward his cultural ambient. This clear-eyed self-awareness and the comprehensiveness and integrity of his understanding of the relationship of Christ to culture deserve a closer examination. So let us turn our attention to the linchpin of Clement's theology, Christ the Logos.

### *C. Clement's Doctrine of Christ the Logos*

Clement's Logos doctrine stands at the confluence of the varied streams of his cultural world: Middle Platonic philosophy, Greco-Roman literature, Alexandrian Judaism, heterodox Gnosticism, and early Greek Christian apologetic traditions. At the same time his vivid portrayal of the Logos as the Savior constitutes the personalizing vision and motivating force of Clement's ethical and spiritual teaching. We will consider this core doctrine under the rubric of three questions. First, how does Clement justify his use of Greek philosophy in general and Middle Platonism in particular? Second, what characteristics of the Middle Platonic philosophy persuade him of its compatibility with Christianity? Third, how does he take the

<sup>41</sup> As observed by Pelikan, *Christian Tradition*, 32, 55. For bibliography and a comprehensive discussion of this issue in relation to Justin, Irenaeus, and Clement, see Chrys Saldanha, *Divine Pedagogy: A Patristic View of Non-Christian Religions*, Biblioteca di Scienze Religiose 57 (Rome: Libreria Ateneo Salesiano, 1984).

Logos of Middle Platonism and transform it into an instrument of Christian teaching?

1. *Clement's justification of the use of philosophy: "barbarian wisdom" and the history of philosophy.* How does Clement justify his use of Greek philosophy in general and Middle Platonism in particular? In his *Stromateis* Clement discusses several different theories about the origin of philosophy. In the past he was considered to be confused or indecisive on this subject.<sup>42</sup> However, recent scholarship on the Hellenistic historiographic polemic of "barbarian wisdom" and its Jewish and early Christian adaptations has provided the framework for Clement's understanding of the history of philosophy. The emerging consensus is that he has integrated three disparate views into a coherent theory of the history of philosophy and its relation to the truth as known in scripture.<sup>43</sup>

According to Clement the earliest philosophers who have a valid claim to know the truth are the wise men of the ancient barbarian, that is, non-Greek, peoples. Among these he counts not only Numa, one of the early Roman kings, and "the prophets of the Egyptians" but also "of the Gauls the Druids," "of the Celts the philosophers" and "of the Persians the Magi"—including Zoroaster as well as those who found the star of Bethlehem.<sup>44</sup> The Brahmins and the adherents of Buddha's teachings are included among the Indians, and Moses and the prophets among the Jews, who are "of all the peoples the oldest by far."<sup>45</sup> None of the ancient sages sees God directly. Instead they see his reflection (*emphasis*).<sup>46</sup> Thus even when their insights are true, they are indirect and not entirely clear. Yet their views have been given to them by the providence of God either through the mediation of angelic powers or by the direct activity of the Logos who has actually dropped bits of truth into them as a farmer sowing seeds.<sup>47</sup>

Thus all these sages would be mistaken should they imagine they had discovered truths on their own. Any truth they see has been given to them, whether they know it or not. Some of the Greek sages, who came later, also participate in this accurate knowledge of the truth. Yet not all the Greek philosophers have the gift even of this capacity to recognize truth. Some

<sup>42</sup> Molland, "Clement of Alexandria."

<sup>43</sup> Jean Daniélou, *A History of Early Christian Doctrine before the Council of Nicaea*, vol. 2, *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture*, trans. John Austin Baker (London: Darton, Longman & Todd; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973), esp. 48-73. See also Lilla, *Clement*, esp. 9-59.

<sup>44</sup> *Strom.* 1.15.66.1-73.6, esp. 71.2-3.

<sup>45</sup> *Strom.* 1.15.66-73, esp. 68.1, 70.2, 71.5-6, 72.4-5.

<sup>46</sup> *Strom.* 1.19.94.3b-7.

<sup>47</sup> *Strom.* 1.7.37.2-3; cf. Lilla, *Clement*, 18.

have instead stolen the ideas of the earlier barbarian sages and represented them as their own insights. Thus all truth in Greek philosophy is mediated, either metaphysically through the Logos or lesser powers, or historically through the theft of doctrines from other wise men and the traditions they established. Finally, some falsehood is also passed down in the guise of truth. But Clement's greatest complaint with respect to the Greek philosophers is their arrogance. They imagine they can take credit for their insights when in fact they are all either false, or stolen from the wisdom of the barbarians, especially from the Jews, or given to a few such as Plato and Pythagoras as gifts of divine providence.

2. *Clement's eclecticism and his definition of a philosophy compatible with Christ.* Where, we may wonder, does Clement fit himself and his Christian philosophy into this picture? Since he specifies that his approach is eclectic, it was once assumed that his principle of selection was somehow explicitly Christian. But more recent work demonstrates that he did not create his eclectic philosophical framework *de novo* from bits and pieces selected from Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, and neo-Pythagoreans. Instead, he incorporated his Christian beliefs into a Middle Platonic frame of reference, which was itself an eclectic construct—at least if we use the term “eclectic” in a neutral descriptive sense rather than the derogatory sense that it once had. As John Dillon has recently observed:

There is nothing at all wrong with being “eclectic,” if that means simply that one is prepared to adopt a good formulation, or a valid line of argument, from a rival school or individual and adjust one's philosophical position accordingly. In this sense, most of the great philosophers are eclectics, and eclecticism is a mark of acuteness and originality, as opposed to narrow-minded sectarianism.<sup>48</sup>

Dillon notes that figures such as Antiochus and Plutarch, while eclectic, in this sense, nonetheless saw themselves as returning to the pure doctrine of Plato. They believed they were turning away from the later Academy toward the original Platonic teachings, better preserved in particular aspects through Aristotle, the Stoics, or the Neo-Pythagoreans, insofar as Zeno and Aristotle were true disciples of Plato, and Plato himself a follower of Pythagoras.

<sup>48</sup> John M. Dillon, “‘Orthodoxy’ and ‘Eclecticism’: Middle Platonists and Neo-Pythagoreans” in *The Question of “Eclecticism”: Studies in Later Greek Philosophy*, Hellenistic Culture and Society 3, ed. John M. Dillon and A. A. Long (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 103-125.



Clement adopted this same framework, ready-made. But he was not just following the current vogue. He gives specific reasons for the compatibility of this philosophical framework to Christian teaching. In a passage of the *Stromateis* that has received surprisingly little scholarly notice, he specifies five criteria necessary for a philosophy to be acceptable for Christians.

These guidelines constitute his answer to the question, is Greek philosophy the “worldly wisdom” that, according to Paul, “is folly in God’s eyes”?<sup>49</sup> After emphasizing the need to trust in the power of God rather than to “glory in one’s superiority in human intelligence,”<sup>50</sup> Clement argues that the “human tradition” rejected by Paul is restricted to those philosophies that deny the Creator and providence or that have an inadequate notion of the spiritual nature of God—views that he identifies as Epicurean and Stoic, respectively. Further, he notes, “The Word does not want the person of faith to be indifferent to truth, and in fact lazy. For he says ‘Seek and you shall find.’”<sup>51</sup> The seeking leads to finding, that is, the seeker is led to Christ. Thenceforth, believers are not forbidden to study philosophy but only to restrict themselves to “the sort of investigation that strengthens our faith.”<sup>52</sup> He completes his argument by specifying the parameters of that sort of investigation:

Teaching that follows Christ recognizes God in the creator. It brings Providence in, even to matters of detail. It shows that the elements are by nature subject to birth and change. It teaches us, so far as we can, to exercise our citizenship in likeness to God, and to accept God’s plan as the directive power for the whole of our education.<sup>53</sup>

The first three criteria pertain to God’s relation to the world. The first, that God must be recognized in the Creator, or more literally, that the “Demiurge is to be deified,” is clearly designed to counter the Marcionite and Gnostic views, and to assert firmly that the visible, material creation is neither accidental nor evil. Yet Clement phrases carefully to allow the delegated creative power posited in the Middle Platonist system. Closely

<sup>49</sup> *Strom.* 1.11.50.1; cf. 1 Cor. 3:19–21. Translation by Ferguson, *Stromateis*, 59.

<sup>50</sup> *Strom.* 1.11.50.1. Translation by Ferguson, *Stromateis*, 59 (modified).

<sup>51</sup> *Strom.* 1.11.51.4. Translation by Ferguson, *Stromateis*, 60 (modified).

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> *Strom.* 1.11.52.3. Translation by Ferguson, *Stromateis*, 60 (modified). The passage is identified by Osborn as a definition of “the philosophy which [Clement] finds acceptable” (*Philosophy of Clement*, 122). It is included in his discussion of “assimilation to God” as the ethical goal of Clement’s theology, where he notes Clement’s frequent citation of Plato’s *Theaetetus* 176B (*Philosophy of Clement*, 84–94, esp. 92). To my knowledge, no one has extensively discussed the passage as a whole.

related is the second criterion, that a doctrine of providence is necessary, one that applies "even in matters of detail." Here, too, the ongoing divine presence and oversight is asserted. Yet study of the notion of providence throughout Clement's literary corpus shows that God's care is often mediated through natural laws or in dealings with larger human communities.<sup>54</sup> Here he emphasizes that neither the philosophical, protoscientific framework nor the broad historical working of providence excludes God's being the ultimate arbiter even of the minor details of an individual life. The third criterion, closely related to both its precursors, specifies that the elements from which the material world is constituted are liable to change and came into existence. Here Clement's precise meaning has been the subject of debate. Certainly he rules out a material world without a Creator, and he excludes a world shaped from elements coeternal with their Creator, but scholars differ on whether he teaches creation *ex nihilo*.<sup>55</sup> What is clear is his intention to assert that the forces of nature are subject to the power of the Creator.

In the last two criteria Clement turns to the subject of the goal of human life and the path by which it is to be achieved. First, we are to "exercise our citizenship in likeness to God." Here we can recognize his oft-repeated characterization of the ultimate goal of the Christian life.<sup>56</sup> For gradual but steady ethical and spiritual transformation is the result of the Savior's teaching both for humankind as a whole and for the individual. Through this schooling in virtue the Christian is led first to the moderation of the passions (*metriopatheia*), then to the achievement of *apatheia*, and thence to the restoration of likeness to God and eventual participation in the very life of God.<sup>57</sup> Finally, in specifying that the divine plan (*oikonomia*) is to be the highest authority in all instruction, Clement insists on a christocentric interpretation of all reality, biblical and otherwise. For in the line just prior to the list of criteria he alluded to the New Testament witness in precisely these terms.<sup>58</sup> So his five criteria of a philosophy compatible with Christian

<sup>54</sup> W. E. G. Floyd, *Clement of Alexandria's Treatment of the Problem of Evil*, Oxford Theological Monographs (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), esp. 35-40.

<sup>55</sup> Floyd, *Clement*, 3-5; Lilla, *Clement*, 193-199.

<sup>56</sup> Lilla, *Clement*, esp. 87, 94, 104, 106-107; Raoul Mortley, *Connaissance religieuse et herménétique chez Clément d'Alexandrie* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973), esp. 156. Cf. Plato *Theaetetus* 176B and n. 53 above.

<sup>57</sup> Lilla, *Clement*, 60-117; Mortley, *Connaissance*, 109-157.

<sup>58</sup> "Take Providence away and God's plan for the Savior appears a legend leading us on 'according to the elemental spirits of the universe and not according to Christ'" (*Strom.* 1.11.52.2. Translation by Ferguson, *Stromateis*, 61). This interpretation is confirmed by the role of the Savior in Clement's *Protreptikos*, *Paedagogos*, and *Stromateis*, as we shall see. Yet there remains some

belief may be summarized as follows: It must recognize God as Creator and providential Ruler, and it must recognize that humans are called to become like God by accepting education according to the divine plan declared and enacted by the Savior.

3. *Clement's vision of the Logos: his elaboration of a philosophy acceptable to Christians.* This brings us to the third question: How does Clement take the Middle Platonic Logos and transform it into an instrument of Christian teaching?

(a) *The Savior as the new Orpheus.* Our acceptance of the ethical and spiritual education according to the divine plan declared and enacted by the Savior, who is the Logos, is precisely the goal of Clement's great tripartite work.<sup>59</sup> Fully revealed in Jesus, Christ as Logos also plays the broader role of implanting truth in all human beings. This notion, vividly portrayed, dominates Clement's *Protreptikos*. Here it is the Savior, the Lo-gos, who sings a powerful new song:

Behold the might of the new song! It has made humans out of stones, humans out of beasts. Those who were as if dead, not being partakers of the true life, have come to life again simply by becoming listeners to this song.<sup>60</sup>

Christ both sings and embodies the new song.<sup>61</sup> At the heart of Clement's theology is his conviction that the same one who "was in the beginning," the same Word of God through whom the universe came to exist,

this very Word has now appeared to human beings, He alone being both, both God and human—the author of all blessings to us; by whom we, being taught to live well, are sent on our way to life eternal.<sup>62</sup>

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ambiguity in his formulation here. For this criterion may also be read as pertaining to the divine plan and the instruction of each individual human being. In this case the demand is that instruction drawn from any human source must always be subject to the higher criterion of the divine economy of providence. For more on this, see André Méhat, *Étude sur les 'Stromates', de Clément d'Alexandrie*, Patristica Sorbonensia 7 (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1966), esp. 309-312.

<sup>59</sup> There is no consensus on the question whether the *Protreptikos*, *Paedagogos*, and *Stromateis* are the three parts of a single work, the *Stromateis* being identical with the promised *Didaskalikos*. Osborn summarizes the earlier debate (*Philosophy of Clement*, 5-7). Scholars continue to declare allegiance to one or another of the possibilities. 1) In favor of the identity of *Stromateis* and *Didaskalikos* is Marrou, *Pédagogie I*, 7-14; 2) opposed is Ferguson, *Stromateis*, 11-12; 3) proposing that the *Stromateis* constitutes the preliminary notes for the projected *Didaskalikos* is Dawson, *Allegorical Readers*, 183. I assume that at least this third option is true.

<sup>60</sup> *Protrept.* 1.4.5. Translation by Wilson, "Exhortation," 172 (modified).

<sup>61</sup> *Protrept.* 1.6.1, 5; 1.7.3. Halton, "Clement's Lyre," develops this theme beautifully.

<sup>62</sup> *Protrept.* 1.7.1. Translation by Wilson, "Exhortation," 173 (modified).

To accentuate this conviction, Clement blends the language of the New Testament with the language of philosophy. The message inherent in his literary method is that Jesus of Nazareth who healed the blind, who died to conquer death is the same one who set the universe in order:

[He, the] supramundane Wisdom, the celestial Word is the all-harmonious melodious, holy instrument of God. What then does this instrument—the Word of God the Logos the New Song—desire? To open the eyes of the blind, and unstop the ears of the deaf, and to lead the lame or the erring to righteousness, to exhibit God to the foolish, to put a stop to corruption, to conquer death, to reconcile disobedient children to their father. The instrument of God loves humankind.<sup>63</sup>

At the same time Clement plays on the image of Orpheus who tamed the wild beasts with his music. Christ is the *new* Orpheus, who like David teaches not idolatry or any of the other deceits of pagan polytheistic myth, but rather liberates from the yoke of false worship:

[The new song of Christ the Logos] has come to loose . . . speedily, the bitter bondage of tyrannizing demons; and leading us back to the mild and loving yoke of piety, [he] recalls to heaven those that had been cast prostrate to the earth.<sup>64</sup>

He polemicizes here against idolatry, the stupid custom of worshipping “blocks of stone and wood—that is statues and paintings.”<sup>65</sup> But he has tied this theme both literarily and philosophically to a broad range of religious issues. The “blocks of stone and wood” worshiped by the Gentiles bring to his mind the words of Jesus that “God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham.”<sup>66</sup> The worshipers of idols, in the familiar words of the Psalmist have “become like them”—ignorant and insensate. Likewise the worshiper of false gods becomes beastlike and needs to be tamed by the new song of the Logos which “alone has tamed people, the most intractable of animals” so that they, too, may become like what they worship, the Logos.<sup>67</sup>

Pursuing the musical metaphor Clement observes that the transformative effect of the new song of the Logos upon its listeners retunes them to their

<sup>63</sup> *Protrept.* 1.5.4–1.6.2. Translation by Wilson, “Exhortation,” 172 (modified).

<sup>64</sup> *Protrept.* 1.3.2. Translation by Wilson, “Exhortation,” 172.

<sup>65</sup> *Protrept.* 1.3.1. Translation by Wilson, “Exhortation,” 172 (modified).

<sup>66</sup> Mt. 3:9; Lk. 3:8; *Protrept.* 1.4.2. Translation by Wilson, “Exhortation,” 172 (modified).

<sup>67</sup> *Protrept.* 1.4.1. Translation by Wilson, “Exhortation,” 172 (modified).



true human nature. For we are "beautiful breathing instrument[s] of music" made "after [God's] own image" and "tuned by the Holy Spirit" along with the entire universe.<sup>68</sup> In their special role as the microcosm, consisting of body and soul, humans are addressed in song by God:

You are my harp, and pipe, and temple. . . . a harp for harmony—a pipe by reason of the Spirit—a temple by reason of the word; so that the first may sound, the second breathe, the third contain the Lord.<sup>69</sup>

In these captivating images Clement has combined the Middle Platonic Logos with allusions to the healing and reconciling ministry of Jesus of Nazareth and with a traditional biblical polemic against idolatry—all while coopting the image of the soothing and ordering music of the pagan god Orpheus.<sup>70</sup>

(b) *The Savior as Sophia incarnate.* This Savior is not only the new Orpheus, he is also the new Sophia. For as Clement says:

The Saviour, who existed before, has in recent days appeared . . . as our Teacher. . . . who now exhorts to salvation, as He has ever done, as He did by signs and wonders in Egypt and the desert, both by the bush and the cloud, which, through the favour of divine love, attended the Hebrews like a handmaid.<sup>71</sup>

Like Justin Martyr before him, Clement here identifies the Logos of Middle Platonism with the figure of Wisdom personified, and he sees this figure as the one who was present in the theophanies of Hebrew scripture. For him as for Justin the figure of Wisdom who exhorts us to follow her ways and to turn away from folly (Proverbs 8), is the same One who spoke through the prophets as well as to Moses in the burning bush.<sup>72</sup> Neither of these second-century Christian writers invented these notions. Both Philo and the author of the Wisdom of Solomon attest a full development of a personified Wisdom or Logos figure who speaks and acts as the agent of

<sup>68</sup> *Protrept.* 1.5.4; 1.5.3. Translation by Wilson, "Exhortation," 172.

<sup>69</sup> *Protrept.* 1.5.3. Translation by Wilson, "Exhortation," 172 (modified).

<sup>70</sup> The polemic against anthropomorphic polytheism is, of course, also philosophical; cf. Finney, *Invisible God*.

<sup>71</sup> *Protrept.* 1.7.3; 1.8.1. Translation by Wilson, "Exhortation," 173.

<sup>72</sup> Pierre Prigent, *Justin et l'Ancien Testament* (Paris: Librairie Lecoq, 1964), esp. 117-133; Willis A. Shotwell, *The Biblical Exegesis of Justin Martyr* (London: SPCK, 1965), esp. 93-115; Demetrios Trakatellis, *The Pre-existence of Christ in the Writings of Justin Martyr*, Harvard Dissertations in Religion 6 (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976), esp. 53-92; Dawson, *Allegorical Readers*, 186-199.

God in the law and the prophets.<sup>73</sup> But the Christian writers take this identification one step further in seeing in the Word/Wisdom figure the same Savior who "has now appeared to human beings."<sup>74</sup>

When Clement adopts the Alexandrian Jewish Wisdom tradition and applies it to the man Jesus of Nazareth, he is faced with an anomaly. The personification of Sophia/Wisdom/Hokhmah had been elaborated along distinctly feminine lines.<sup>75</sup> She, the consort of God, may also become the bride of the sage, who says:

Her I loved and sought out from my youth,  
and longed to make her my bride,  
and I became a lover of her beauty.  
She magnifies her noble birth by enjoying intimacy with God,  
and the Master of All loved her.  
For she is initiate in the knowledge of God,  
and chooser of his works.<sup>76</sup>

Even Philo, who dislikes female imagery for the deity, preserves instances of such feminine metaphors, perhaps from earlier levels of Alexandrian exegetical tradition.<sup>77</sup> When Justin adopted this sapiential material, he abandoned the distinctly female nuances. In an aside about the philosophical tradition allegorizing Athena's emergence from the head of Zeus as Wisdom emerging from the ineffable deity, he reveals the basis of his choice: "They speak of Athena as the first thought; we regard it as ridiculous to propose the shape of females as the image of thought."<sup>78</sup>

<sup>73</sup> David Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible 43 (New York: Doubleday, 1979), esp. 33-63. For Philo, see Burton L. Mack, *Logos und Sophia: Untersuchungen zur Weisheitstheologie im hellenistischen Judentum*, Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments 10 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973).

<sup>74</sup> *Prot rept.* 1.7.1.

<sup>75</sup> For a survey of the materials and issues, see Joan C. Engelsman, *The Feminine Dimension of the Divine* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1979).

<sup>76</sup> Wis. 8:2-4. Translation by David Winston, *Wisdom*, 191. Cf. Wis. 8:16 and Winston's discussion, *Wisdom*, 192-196.

<sup>77</sup> On the symbolism of male and female in Philo, see Richard A. Baer, Jr., *Philo's Use of the Categories Male and Female*, Arbeiten zur Literatur und Geschichte des Hellenistischen Judentums 3 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970); and Dorothy Sly, *Philo's Perception of Women*, Brown Judaic Studies 209 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990). On distinguishing Philo's views from the earlier layers of exegesis, see Thomas H. Tobin, *The Creation of Man: Philo and the History of Interpretation*, The Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series 14 (Washington: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1983).

<sup>78</sup> Justin *First Apology* 64.5 (Edgar J. Goodspeed, ed., *Die älteste Apologeten* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984], 73-74). Tertullian uses many of the same passages as Justin and Clement to assert the preexistence of Christ, but the vivid personification is absent; cf. Prigent, *Justin*, esp. 127-133; and J. E. L. Van der Geest, *Le Christ et l'Ancien Testament chez Tertullian*, *Latinitas Christianorum Primaeva* (Nijmegen: Dekker & Van de Veegt, 1972), esp. 216-251.

Clement, by contrast, draws in these images of Wisdom as mother, giving predominance to the grammatically masculine Logos as the name of the Savior as well as to the sexually masculine incarnation of the Savior in Jesus, but he neither rejects nor ridicules the application of female metaphors to this preexistent divine being. Indeed, he transfers the imagery in startlingly graphic form to God the Father as well:

To Christ the fulfilling of His Father's will was food; and to us infants, who milk the Word of the heavens, Christ is food. Hence seeking is called sucking; for to those infants who seek the Word, the Father's nipples of the love of humankind supply milk.<sup>79</sup>

This image occurs in the context of Clement's proposal that we who may be accustomed to understand the eucharistic command to "eat [Christ's] flesh and drink His blood" not mystically but "perhaps more commonly," should now, "hear it also in the following way." The flesh represents the Holy Spirit who created it; the blood represents the Logos. The union of both, "the Lord Jesus, the Word of God, the Spirit made flesh," is both "the milk of the Father by which infants are suckled" and the "'care-soothing breast' [*Iliad* 22.83] of the Father". This milk is identical with the blood that Christ "shed for us to save humanity."<sup>80</sup> Indeed, he observes, "the Word is figuratively described [in scripture] in many ways as meat, and flesh, and food, and bread, and blood, and milk."<sup>81</sup> These are all compatible since different physical and physiological conditions transform various liquids into solids and transform a mother's blood into milk for her infant.<sup>82</sup>

While we may become lost in Clement's metaphorical labyrinth, and we may even find his science somewhat dated, I think we cannot avoid being affected by his powerful maternal imagery as well as by its theological import. For in another passage he asserts that:

God, out of His great love of humankind, comes to the help of humankind, as the mother-bird flies to one of her young that has fallen out of the nest; and if a serpent open its mouth to swallow the little bird, 'the mother flutters round, uttering cries of grief over her dear progeny' [*Iliad* 2.315]; and God the Father seeks His creature [*plasma*], and heals its transgression, and pursues the serpent, and recovers the young one, and incites it to fly up to the nest.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>79</sup> *Paed.* 1.6.46.1. Translation by Wilson, "The Instructor," 221 (modified).

<sup>80</sup> *Paed.* 1.6.43.2-4 passim. Translation by Wilson, "The Instructor," 220 (modified).

<sup>81</sup> *Paed.* 1.6.47.2 passim. Translation by Wilson, "The Instructor," 221 (modified).

<sup>82</sup> *Paed.* 1.6.44.1-45.3; cf. *Paed.* 1.6.39-41.

<sup>83</sup> *Protrept.* 10.91.3. Translation by Wilson, "Exhortation," 197 (modified).

These images of God as the nursing mother and as mother bird communicate with unique poignancy the depth of the Divine *philanthrōpia*, God's love of and commitment to human beings. The mother bird's rescue of her young contains another allegory important to Clement: she cannot simply rescue her little one but must urge it to imitate her and fly up to the nest.

(c) *The Savior's "tones of voice" and gradual ascent to likeness to God.* We have considered two of Clement's images of the Savior: the new Orpheus and the maternal Sophia. Now let us turn to the image of Christ the Teacher, first, the *Paedagogos* or child's instructor in basic ethical behavior, and secondly, the *Didaskalos*, the teacher of more advanced philosophical and spiritual doctrine. Clement utilizes these images to relate the varied biblical theologies to stages of ethical and spiritual development both for groups of people and for individuals.

First, within the Bible he portrays the Savior as the Christ-Orpheus who speaks or sings in a variety of tones each suited to the addressee:

[The Savior] who from the beginning gave revelation by prophecy, but now plainly calls to salvation. . . . has many tones of voice, and many methods for human salvation. By threatening He admonishes, by reproaching He converts, by bewailing He pities, by the voice of song He cheers.<sup>84</sup>

Secondly, having recognized the multiple tones of the Savior testified in the Bible, Clement was willing to allow that the same Savior had spoken through certain Greek philosophers and some barbarian sages, as we have already noted. He also implicitly recognized that the Savior spoke to and through the ancient Greek literary tradition—Homer and Hesiod, the tragedians, and the poets in general. Thus his work is punctuated with allusions to the ancient Greek literature that are meant not merely to establish him as a man of wide learning but more importantly to show that, to the discerning scholar, the entire history of humanity bears witness to the loving communication of the Savior. Often even without the understanding of the poet, the Savior has spoken the words of truth to humankind, always in the tones appropriate to their state of religious awareness and their level of ethical advancement.

Yet this is one and the same God who has spoken to all human beings in every time, place, and culture. Further, the message, most clearly and fully set forth in the incarnation, is always fundamentally the same: God loves

<sup>84</sup> *Protrept.* 1.7-6-8.3. Translation by Wilson, "Exhortation," 173 (modified).



and cares for humankind and calls us to become God-like. For, he says, "now the Word Himself clearly converses with you, shaming your unbelief. Yes, I say, the Word of God became human that you may learn from a human being how a human being may become God."<sup>85</sup>

How is this transformation to be achieved? Clement's *Paedagogos* provides the first level of instruction. Here he addresses a multifarious array of topics pertaining to proper behavior. He offers advice on eating, drinking, bathing, exercise, sexual behavior, and appropriate styles of walking, as well as on home furnishings, clothing, jewelry, makeup, and whether or not to pluck the hair, especially the beard. The specificity and comprehensiveness of his admonitions provide a treasure trove of the mores and trappings of aristocratic life in the Roman Empire, not to speak of a welcome note of levity for the diligent student of Patristics. He counsels, for example, that at banquets one ought to avoid whistling, blowing the nose, coughing, spitting, belching, sneezing, and scratching the ears.<sup>86</sup> As to elegant footwear, white sandals should suffice; the "foolish artifices of golden and gem-studded sandals, of Attic and Sicyonian boots, and buskins, and Persian and Tyrrhenian slippers as well" are to be given up.<sup>87</sup> In this day of designer sheets and elaborate bedding, we might be well advised to update and heed his advice to eschew gold embroidery, purple dyes, silver-footed couches, and downy feathers since, after all, "Jacob slept on the ground with a stone for his pillow."<sup>88</sup>

The point of all this, lest we forget in the enjoyment of the details, is that we seek true beauty, which consists in the adornment not of the body but of the soul. To that end we must pursue self-control (*enkrateia*), self-sufficiency (*autarkeia*), self-reliance (*autourgia*), thrift (*euteleia*), and temperance (*sōphrosynē*).<sup>89</sup> Clement's audience, clearly presumed to be aristocratic, male and female, is advised not to be overly dependent on slaves. They, too, are created in the image of God, but more importantly, lack of self-sufficiency would stand in the way of moral progress.<sup>90</sup> In his advice and its rationale he simply reaffirms Stoic ethical teaching, as was well known in his time as it is in ours.

But we must also remember that the ultimate goal of Christian life is not the moderation of the passions but their extirpation and the subsequent

<sup>85</sup> *Protrep.* 1.8.4. Translation by Wilson, "Exhortation," 174 (modified).

<sup>86</sup> *Paed.* 2.7.60.

<sup>87</sup> *Paed.* 2.11.116.2-117.1. Translation by Wood, *Christ the Educator*, 189.

<sup>88</sup> *Paed.* 2.9.77-78. Translation by Wood, *Christ the Educator*, 159-160.

<sup>89</sup> *Paed.* 1.12.98.4, 3.2.4.1, 3.6.35.3, 3.7.38.3.

<sup>90</sup> *Strom.* 4.8.58-69; and see n. 89 above.

stage of assimilation to God, the more purely Platonic phase of Clement's ethic. This is the subject of the *Stromateis*. All are called to this stage—slave and free, male and female are meant to become philosophers and “knowing witnesses” to Christ, who now takes the role of *Didaskalos*, the teacher of higher philosophical and spiritual doctrines.

Clement has been appreciated for his emphasis on the equal summoning of women to “philosophize,” that is, to respond to the same call to virtue, based on their possession of the same nature as men's, and on their full possession of the *imago dei*.<sup>91</sup> He reinforces the point with a catalogue of women drawn from the Bible and from Greek philosophical traditions. These women commemorated for their pursuit of the higher level of perfection through heroic self-denial include Judith, Esther, Susanna, and Miriam (who, however, is identified only as “the sister of Moses”). Also mentioned is Lysidica, who “through excess of modesty, bathed in her clothes” and Theano the Pythagorean, who had made “such progress in philosophy, that to him who looked intently at her, and said, ‘Your arm is beautiful,’ she answered [evidently deeming this a form of sexual harassment!] ‘Yes, but it is not public.’”<sup>92</sup>

In the midst of these anecdotes, we must be reminded of the seriousness of our calling to likeness to God. On the other hand, to post-Freudian ears the extirpation of the passions sounds like repression of feelings. Without making unrealistic and anachronistic claims for Clement and his monastic heirs, we should note that the passions (*pathē*)—which include prominently not only sexual desire but also anger—are first to be gradually moderated as one moves toward the goal of *apatheia*. This is closer to sublimation than to repression. In his discussion of the Beatitudes, moreover, Clement relates the extirpation of anger to the command to love our enemies, thus reminding us also that the love of humankind (*philanthrōpia*) is not one of the passions.<sup>93</sup> It is the characteristic attitude of the one Savior who lovingly summons us all in varied tones to become ever more God-like—thus more philanthropic.

(d) *The roots of Clement's notion of the Savior's “tones of voice.”* When Clement elaborates on the various “tones of voice” of the Savior or the

<sup>91</sup> *Strom.* 4.8.58-69. See Kari Elisabeth Børresen, “God's Image, Man's Image? Patristic Interpretation of Gen. 1,27 and I Cor. 11,7,” in *Image of God and Gender Models in Judaeo-Christian Tradition*, ed. Kari E. Børresen (Oslo: Solum Forlag, 1991), 188-207, esp. 194-196. But see also Donald Kinder, “Clement of Alexandria: Conflicting Views on Women,” *The Second Century* 7 (1989-90): 213-220.

<sup>92</sup> *Strom.* 4.19.118.1-123.1, esp. 119.1-3, 120.1, 121.2. Translation by Wilson, “Stromata,” 431.

<sup>93</sup> *Strom.* 4.14.95-96.

various cures of the good physician, he implies a hermeneutical method that corresponds in some degree to his theory of the histories of religion and philosophy. Simultaneously he is engaged in a subtle antiheretical polemic. Let us pause for a moment to consider this.

Both Apelles, a former disciple of Marcion, and Ptolemy, a Valentinian Gnostic, had proposed multiple-source theories for the interpretation of scripture.<sup>94</sup> Rather than the diversity of human voices to be heard in the biblical writings, their concern was the variety of theologies implied by differing strands of the scriptural witness. If this was inspired writing, they reasoned, the scripture bore witness to more than one spiritual being. As a result, each of these Gnostic theologians devised his own set of literary and theological criteria to divide scripture into discrete segments; each literary segment was understood to be inspired by that particular spiritual being, whose level of goodness, perfection, and knowledge was proportionate to the theological level of the scriptural pericope.

Over against these systems of Apelles and Ptolemy, Clement reiterates the view already propounded within the Alexandrian Jewish tradition and attested in the Wisdom of Solomon and by Philo. It is the divine Wisdom who speaks and acts throughout Israelite history. With Justin and other early Christian writers he adds that the very same divine Wisdom became uniquely present to humankind in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

Yet Clement also acknowledges the point made by Apelles and Ptolemy: the scripture seems to speak with more than one voice. The theological differences in the inspired book are far from trivial; they are not easily reconciled. Clement answers that there are not several different beings possessing varying degrees of goodness and spiritual power who speak through scripture. It is instead a single Savior who speaks in "many tones of voice" who chooses among his "many methods of salvation" the one most appropriate to the people of a given time and place.

### III. CONCLUDING REMARKS

I have attempted to illustrate the relevance of the early Christian writings to contemporary concerns. Looking first at the general field, I have observed that recent trends in the study of the early church have been toward broadening and deepening of the definition of the field to take into account

<sup>94</sup> Most recently on Ptolemy and Apelles, see Robert M. Grant, *Heresy and Criticism: The Search for Authenticity in Early Christian Literature* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), esp. 49-58, 75-88.

the full social and religious context of all the early Christian writers—no longer only those deemed orthodox or only those who lived within the Greco-Latin linguistic sphere, or only those who were men.

Then, as an example of the perennial relevance of this literature, I have focused particularly on the question of the relationship between Christianity and culture as it is discussed and embodied in the writings of Tertullian and Clement. Although their selections and their implied criteria are similar in many respects, significant differences remain. Rather than systematically exploring those differences, I have chosen to bestow a larger share of attention on Clement and especially on his understanding of the Logos.

I have done so for two reasons. First, he reflects self-consciously and honestly on his process of selection. While he adopts ideas, phrases, and even entire blocks of material from Greek literary tradition, from Middle Platonic philosophy, from Alexandrian Judaism, and from earlier Christian interpreters, including even some he himself deems heretical, he has thought carefully about how to fit them together and which notions are to be excluded.

Secondly, his Christian vision is presented in rich imagery and with a joyful spirit of inclusiveness. I admit to being won over by his versatile and imaginative appropriation of Greek literature and religious lore, by his readiness to use feminine metaphors for the divine saving love, by his profound appreciation of the beauty and goodness of the creation, and by his insistence on the universal human calling to grow constantly into the divine likeness.

Those of us who may turn to Clement in hopes of finding an early Christian writer who recognizes the full equality and independent value of nonbiblical religion may be disappointed. Clement is relentlessly christocentric. He is utterly convinced that the fullness of truth rests not only in scripture but in scripture read through the lens of the incarnation. Yet this does not prevent his deep conviction that the Savior who appeared in these last days in human form has been using every human religion and every little bit of truth in philosophy to call out—indeed to sing to humankind, to lure us as little fishes with his bait, to feed us at his breast with the milk of wisdom, and to draw us into his loving embrace so that we may be Christ-begotten co-citizens with God.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>95</sup> On these images in Clement's hymn appended to some manuscripts of *Paedagogos*, see Marrou, *Pédagogue III*, esp. 192-207.



# Afrocentrism, the Bible, and the Politics of Difference

by CAIN HOPE FELDER

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THE CLOSING decade of this century may one day be remembered as one of change both political and cultural. Politically, we live in a post-Cold War era in which the great "evil empire" of communism simply threw in the towel in a fight that proved too expensive and senseless. Culturally, our decade is facing the challenge of multiculturalism on an unprecedented scale. Many scholars are exploring alternative, more comprehensive perspectives on history in an effort to transcend the traditional study of the past from the sole vantage point of white males and to allow the emergence of a collective narrative about the multifarious contributions of all races to the human adventure of achievement and civilization.

Multiculturalists acknowledge the collective sins of the past and confront the intricate systems of blatant and subtle white privilege to allow more American Christians to develop a stronger sense of what it means to have a common citizenship—not only in America—but in the household of God. Unfortunately, in an uncanny and even paradoxical way, the widening public discourse in America on multiculturalism has been substantially damaged and confused by those who have only wanted to exploit the new awareness of differences of race, gender, culture, class, and religion in order to maintain their own firm control over wealth, political power, and concomitant institutions such as those of higher education. This "politics of difference" has tended to be divisive, negative, and even violent, breeding fear, mistrust, and open hostility. Yet there is another, more constructive side to multiculturalism, one that seeks to transcend the politics of difference and thereby create a wholesome new spirit of joy in a life of Christian service to others.

In her book *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*, Toni Morrison perceptively observes that it is not enough to focus on the existence of racism in American society solely in terms of its impact on the victim. Morrison insists that we must study afresh the impact of racism not only on its victims but also on "those who variously perpetuate it."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 11.

The Bible has many surprises. In study and research over the past two decades, I have become increasingly concerned about the thoroughgoing Eurocentric translation, reading, and interpretation of the Bible. By "Eurocentric" I mean the recasting of the entire biblical tradition into an ancient religious drama of Eurasian Hebrews who once sojourned in Egypt, which somehow was removed from black Africa, then evolved in an ancient Canaan that had little or no relation to Africa, and eventually gave rise to the birth of a European Jesus and Christianity as a Hellenistic religion of the Greco-Roman world. In his important volume, *Jesus through the Centuries*, Jaroslav Pelikan of Yale University has no problem asserting that of course Christianity has spread throughout the world under the banner of the European Jesus.<sup>2</sup> But it was not the authors of the Bible who created that Jesus; rather, the European Jesus was the creation of a postbiblical Western culture (especially medieval and Renaissance artists) and its allied religious institutions. It is not going too far to say that over the centuries there has been a subtle but steady process by which the Bible has become a captive of Europe and more recently Euro-American thought. Nevertheless, surprises come out of the biblical ethos of the distant past, giving rise to new biblical-hermeneutical methods such as cultural exegesis and Afrocentric biblical interpretation.

In short, I am suggesting that the Bible itself reflects a genuine multiculturalism, patterns of racial and ethnic diversity, and a bona fide universalism that have all been minimized and effectively trivialized in the triumphant march of the Western church. This claim is not made to put anyone on the defensive; rather, it is put forward as an invitation to rediscover the lost multicultural biblical world as a most appropriate hermeneutical method for understanding our world as a global village today. In this connection, I would like to begin with Afrocentric biblical interpretation, because the term "Afrocentric" is widely, and apparently quite intentionally, being misunderstood as it is redefined in the popular media of America.

Afrocentricity is the idea that Africa and persons of African descent must be seen as proactive subjects within history, rather than as passive objects of Western history. Afrocentrism means reestablishing Africa and its descendants as centers of value, without in any way demeaning other people and their historical contributions to world civilization. The term was coined by

<sup>2</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan, *Jesus through the Centuries: His Place in the History of Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

Molefi Kete Asante, chair of the African American Studies Department at Temple University.<sup>3</sup> Several of us in the biblical field have adopted the term as a way to describe our understanding of the task of interpreting the Bible in a manner that contrasts with the standard treatment of Africa by Eurocentric exegetes.

Throughout the world today, it has become routine for persons of all races to think of biblical characters from Adam and Eve to Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Moses, and even the pharaohs of Egypt, Jesus and his parents, and the entire range of leaders in the church of the first century as somehow typical Europeans. This tendency is now being substantively challenged as recent studies devote more attention to the importance of ancient Egyptian and Ethiopian civilizations in the shaping of the biblical world. Furthermore, we are also learning much from new studies of ancient iconography. The evidence suggests that the biblical ethos was without color prejudice. It had no notion of "race" in the modern sense of the term, and it did not depict blacks in an unfavorable light. Genesis 2:10-14, a tenth-century B.C. Jahwist composite, tells us quite plainly where the garden of Eden was thought to be. The first pair of rivers described there—the Pishon and the Gihon—must be associated with Africa. Indeed, the author of this biblical passage goes to great lengths to make it explicit that the second pair of rivers—the Tigris and the Euphrates—were located far to the east in what was then known as Asia. Nevertheless, in modern times this second river basin has been renamed by Western scholars as "the cradle of civilization."

Especially in the past few centuries, we have witnessed the rise of pseudo-scientific theories of Aryan/Anglo-Saxon racial supremacy and alleged inherent Negroid inferiority traceable to the writings of François Bernier (1685) and Carolus Linnaeus (1735).<sup>4</sup> Such theories constituted much of the foundation for the Aryan model of historiography and hermeneutics as Martin Bernal shows in his recent volumes entitled *Black Athena*.<sup>5</sup> These theoretical constructs were designed to further the imperialistic aims of the conquering and enslaving European powers and began tacitly to influence interpretations of the Bible for missionary activities among subjugated peoples of color. Over the years, the impact has been devastating to people of

<sup>3</sup> Molefi Kete Asante, *Afrocentricity*, new & rev. ed. (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1988).

<sup>4</sup> Cain Hope Felder, ed., *Story the Road We Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991).

<sup>5</sup> Martin Bernal, *Black Athena*, vol. 1, *The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization: The Fabrication of Ancient Greece, 1785-1985*; vol. 2, *The Archaeological and Documentary Evidence* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987-1991).

color who began to devalue their own cultures and innocently accept damaging myths about themselves, such as "the curse of Ham" and "the curse of Cain."

Our present cultural crisis in meaning and values is seldom informed in any helpful way by newer biblical interpretive methods. Most people outside the scholarly guilds who care at all about the Bible are still in a popular, precritical stage of biblical interpretation. Frequently it is only through a narrow, self-serving ideological prism that the Bible serves as a source for modern decision making. Today in America we routinely encounter gross fundamentalism and claims of biblical sanction for tacit right-wing politics. At the other end of the political spectrum, where the Bible is not completely ignored, it usually serves as a compendium of selected proof-texts for left-wing manifestos. In either case, biblical authority is invoked largely by virtue of some subjective or socialized rule of faith rather than by a constructive hermeneutics proceeding from the realities of the ancient text. Has the time not arrived for us to challenge boldly the normative claim of many of the presuppositions of Western intellectual and theological tradition?

The Synoptic tradition in the New Testament provides a strong and perhaps surprising basis for a constructive hermeneutics for assessing the importance of multiculturalism. I would like to call attention to two versions of a parable found respectively in Matthew 22 and Luke 14. The Matthean version is generally known as the parable of the marriage feast and is the last in a cluster of three parables that closes Matthew's fourth collection of discourse material. Each of these three parables—the parable of the two sons (21:29-32), the parable of the vineyard and the tenants (21:33-46), and the parable of the marriage feast (22:1-14)—involves a severe judgment against those who do not respond favorably to the invitation to enter what Jesus offers as the kingdom of God. In the third parable, that of the marriage feast, not only is the initial invitation dismissed, but the messengers are destroyed, in accordance with the ancient practice of killing those bearing bad news. Then, a second invitation to the marriage feast is extended, but now to those "at the intersection nearest the city limits" (*epi tas diexodous*). Matthew expands the parable into a pronouncement story by adding that the second invitation included "both the good and the bad." Matthew thereby highlights the pronouncement in verse 14, the familiar "for many are called but few are chosen."

Luke's version, known as the parable of the great banquet, is quite different; it is less punitive in terms of strict justice and more inclusive not



only of those who languish on the margins of ancient Jewish society but also of those who are on the "main roads and alleys of the city" (*eis tas plateias kai rhyrnas tēs poleōs*). In Luke 14:15-24, there are three separate invitations that become increasingly intense as those invited offer various excuses for not accepting the great banquet being offered free of charge. In Luke's version of the parable, nothing of the *lex talionis* (law of retaliation) of Matthew survives. Instead, Luke's parable reflects a genuine universalism that suggests a new model for "habits of the heart." What is particularly fascinating about the Lukan version is the use of the Greek terms *anankēn* (14:18b) and *anankason* (14:23), the root verb of which is *anankazō*, meaning "compel" or "force."

Luke surprises the reader by introducing inclusiveness as a matter of divine compulsion! He has already hinted at this with a small editorial flourish in Luke 13:29, where again he seems to be editing Matthew. Whereas in Matthew 8:11 Jesus says that many will come from east and west, Luke 13:29 mentions not just those from the east and west, but those from the north and south as well! Is not Luke's emphasis driven home poignantly in Acts 8, when the Holy Spirit moves into the Samaritan north as well as to the south on the Gaza road to Africa? In the Acts of the Apostles, there can be little doubt that Luke intends for his readers to appreciate the necessity of ethnic and racial inclusiveness. The point is established at the Feast of Weeks in the racial and ethnic diversity of Acts 2:8-9 and reinforced variously, not least in Acts 8 with the Ethiopian finance minister, in 13:1 where two Africans are included among "the prophets and teachers" at Antioch, and in the various New Testament references to Asia.

#### EUROCENTRISM AND THE PROBLEM OF RACISM IN AMERICA

To my mind, Robert Cottrol, writing in the American Federation of Teachers' *The American Educator*, is on target in asserting that "diverse peoples can share a common national identity and participate, or at least aspire to participate in a common culture."<sup>6</sup> The problem is that creating the conditions and climate for the emergence of a coherent, racially diverse national identity and common culture requires the courage to confront the excesses and collective sins of the past and the will to institute correctives for the future. In my own recent books, I have spoken of the importance of employing a hermeneutics of suspicion comprehensively in relation to the received tradition of Eurocentrism. This means questioning the wisdom of

<sup>6</sup> Robert Cottrol, in *The American Educator* (Winter 1991): 16.

European or Euro-American scholars who studiously refuse to be inclusive of persons or cultures different from their own. Thus, in *Troubling Biblical Waters: Race, Class, and Family*<sup>7</sup> and *Stony the Road We Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation*,<sup>8</sup> as well as most recently in *The Original African Heritage Study Bible*,<sup>9</sup> we call for and employ corrective historiography as a means of disclosing and recasting the Eurocentric overlay that has been placed on the ancient biblical world and the Bible itself.

Nevertheless, those of us who wish to advance multiculturalism and a kind of Afrocentrism as corrective historiography must beware of certain pitfalls. The following is a list of traps into which a number of excessive or sensationalist proponents of multiculturalism and Afrocentrism have fallen:

A. Demonizing categorically all white people, without careful differentiation between persons of goodwill who are allies or potential allies and those white adversaries who consciously and systematically perpetuate racism.

B. Replacing Eurocentrism with an equally hierarchical, gender-insensitive, and racially exclusive "centrism" based on a new fantastic mythology in which one group of people or another claims to be, by virtue of race or ethnicity, "the chosen people," whether Jews, blacks, or Asians. An example is the dubious notion of Africans as "sun people" and Europeans as "ice people" (see Welsing, Jefferies, and other melanin theoreticians).

C. Adopting multiculturalism as a curricular alternative that eliminates, marginalizes, or vilifies European heritage to the point that Europe epitomizes all the evil in the world; this results in a balkanization of ethnic studies.

D. Not differentiating between the different types of multiculturalism and Afrocentrism that exist.

Here are both gross overreactions and factually incorrect material that is bad history and bad scholarship, and will ultimately be counterproductive, for it offends more than it enlightens. These are but some of the pitfalls or dangers in the "cultural wars" that not only impede progress but obscure the important constructive goals of getting all faculty and students to think critically and inclusively as we forge a new sense of common Christian identity or even shared citizenship, irrespective of race, gender, or class.

<sup>7</sup> Cain Hope Felder, *Troubling Biblical Waters: Race, Class, and Family* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1989).

<sup>8</sup> See n. 4 above.

<sup>9</sup> Cain Hope Felder, ed., *The Original African Heritage Study Bible* (Nashville: James C. Winston, 1993).

Eurocentrism is a term that denotes the tendency to focus on the contributions, achievements, and significance of Europe dating back to ancient Greece and Rome as the beginning of Western civilization. In this process, the contributions by antecedent non-European groups are marginalized. Eurocentrism has expressed itself tacitly as the presupposed norm for determining value. Since the European Renaissance and Enlightenment, it has provided its own theoretical pseudo-scientific justification (as in the works of François Bernier [1685], Carolus Linnaeus [1735], and especially the German anthropologist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach [1775], who established the category of the Caucasian as including those from northern Europe to North Africa).

Eurocentrism is at heart hierarchical and exclusivist, but so are schools of thought within multiculturalism. Let us illustrate with Afrocentrism. I distinguish between at least three different types of Afrocentrism, and have no difficulty identifying myself as Afrocentric without allowing my adversaries to define closely this movement based upon its more excessive/sensationalist expressions. First, there is Afrocentrism that stresses corrective historiography. Accordingly, Africa and persons of African descent are portrayed as proactive in written history and not as passive stereotypes and objects of history. No attempt is made to demean, vilify, or minimize the contributions of others. Nor is there a need to romanticize the black experience or otherwise fabricate mythical aspects of the past in the cause of enhancing self-esteem. This is primarily the type of Afrocentrism to which I subscribe, and I see it as aligned with the larger multicultural agenda calling for a new critical inquiry and a multiracial and multi-ethnic sense of national identity and/or shared Christian purpose.

Nevertheless, there is a second form of Afrocentrism. For years, various proponents of Afrocentrism have argued for a common cultural heritage, worldview, and ethos, suggesting variously that there were unique unifying factors—rhythm, drum, harmony with nature, and a reverence for after-life—that were and are defining indices of what it means to be black African. From Senghor to Asante, heritage, worldview, and ethos have constituted hallmarks for Afrocentricity, but there are exclusive and hierarchical elements too.

All the more is this true of the third form of Afrocentrism, black nationalism. Proponents of this form of Afrocentrism, from Edward Wilmot Blyden in the nineteenth century to Al Cleague, Louis Farrakhan, and Leonard Jefferies today, do not just argue for African cultural distinctiveness, but suggest that somehow this distinctiveness makes African people

better and stronger than others. Thus the African needs to be separated from the destructive politics or alienating cultures of others, especially the Europeans. In its notorious recent expression, Leonard Jefferies and perhaps Francis Cress Welsing<sup>10</sup> (Cress theory of color confrontation) advocate a melanin theory that contrasts the hostile European "ice people" from the harmonious African "sun people." Here skin color determined by percentages of melanin provides a reverse racist mode of valorization. I remain skeptical about the second form of Afrocentrism and reject outright this third form as potentially damaging to the entire multiculturalist movement within America. More than anything else, it jettisons critical scholarly inquiry and undermines any basis for common American citizenship and collective national identity.

#### REDISCOVERING THE WORLD BEFORE COLOR PREJUDICE: BEYOND THE POLITICS OF RACIAL DIFFERENCE

Church leaders and Bible scholars across denominational lines could profit immensely from recent studies that depict the ancient biblical world and the attendant Greco-Roman ethos as worlds before color prejudice. Lloyd Thompson's *Romans and Blacks*<sup>11</sup> and Frank M. Snowden's *Blacks in Antiquity*<sup>12</sup> and *Before Color Prejudice: The Ancient View of Blacks*<sup>13</sup> help immensely in contrasting modern ideas about racial hierarchy and oppression with the ancient context that had no such notion of race, racial oppression, or policy of devaluing Africa and its offspring. It is unfortunate that few Christian colleges and seminaries take seriously the pedagogical and curricular implications of the modern fabrication of race.

As I have pointed out in my own published work, the relatively modern creation of racial typologies served the imperialist powers as they expanded and enslaved persons of color. Racial hierarchies have the specific function of dehumanizing persons who can then, without guilt or reservation, be enslaved. The persistence of racial bigotry and the subtleties of "academic racism" ultimately give rise to skewed housing patterns, interracial hostili-

<sup>10</sup> Frances Cress Welsing, *The Isis Papers: The Keys to the Colors* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1991).

<sup>11</sup> Lloyd A. Thompson, *Romans and Blacks* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989).

<sup>12</sup> Frank M. Snowden, *Blacks in Antiquity: Ethiopians in the Greco-Roman Experience* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970).

<sup>13</sup> Frank M. Snowden, *Before Color Prejudice: The Ancient View of Blacks* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Belknap Press, 1983).



ties, and hate crimes today. This will continue until higher education implements curricular alternatives of inclusiveness that courageously provide moral leadership for a new collective future.

One example of such leadership within American higher education is certainly Martin Bernal's four-volume work in progress, with two major volumes already published, *Black Athena*.<sup>14</sup> Bernal, professor of government at Cornell University, argues that Egyptians and Phoenicians exerted far more extensive influence on shaping ancient Greece than has been acknowledged by departments of Greco-Roman Classical Studies. In a recent interview at the Library of Congress, Bernal said that until the 1840s, historians acknowledged the contributions of Egyptian and Phoenician civilization, but then a variety of factors including the slave trade caused many to rewrite history.<sup>15</sup> Yet Bernal is reluctant to criticize the work of the German anthropologist Blumenbach, who formally recast the Egyptians as Caucasians (the U.S. Department of State still so classifies all North Africans). Bernal does not want to call the ancient Egyptians "black" Africans, despite the fact that for most of U.S. history, a person was deemed Negro/black with the most minuscule amount (eight generations back) of African ancestry.<sup>16</sup> Bernal readily admits the mixed racial stock of the ancient Egyptians, but he, along with most Euro-American Egyptologists, does not want the ancient Egyptians to be brought within the range of hues routinely considered "black" today.

This conspiracy of reluctance by white scholars to concede anything that might enhance the sense of black self-esteem seems to me to parallel what Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. excoriates as bad history and myth making among self-esteem-starved minorities.<sup>17</sup> So many in white American higher education seem to fear some kind of illusory great "power shift." The logic seems to be that if too much corrective historiography and revision of course syllabi takes place for the benefit of blacks, then instead of massive dropouts and incarceration of blacks there will be wholesale displacement of white privilege, wealth, and traditional white-preference networks. The logic is difficult to grasp, document, or otherwise establish as anything other than exploitation of the politics of difference, paranoia, and myopic hysteria.

Tragically, the herd mentality of much of the dominant American cul-

<sup>14</sup> See n. 5 above.

<sup>15</sup> Barbara Bryant, "Cultural Controversy: Writer Questions Basis of Classical Scholarship," *Library of Congress Information Bulletin* 52, no. 10 (May 17, 1993): 197.

<sup>16</sup> See *Chronicle of Higher Education* (June 16, 1993): 7.

<sup>17</sup> Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *Disuniting of America* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1992).



ture discourages many white students from knowing much about their own history—good or bad. Insulated by the sanitized and romanticized appropriateness of Eurocentrism, the average white undergraduate or seminarian is easy prey for exploitation by the politics of racial difference. The native American, the Latino/a, or the Asian American remains to a degree a stranger, potentially “threatening” or unfairly benefiting in competition with whites. Hence the question remains, who will assume the responsibility for correcting the deteriorating circumstance of racial and ethnic divisiveness and misunderstanding? The private sector has overwhelmingly tended to deny any responsibility; the government claims to have neither the resources nor the will to do it; the churches tend to follow trends in popular culture and housing patterns rather than provide social and moral leadership (11:00 a.m. on Sunday is still the most segregated hour). Despite this, the Bible exhorts the church to redouble its efforts and embolden its moral vision in providing more leadership in the global context. One may well ask, how do we in theological education define our responsibilities in this regard?

Having studied and taught at white and black colleges and seminaries, I am confident that America’s true greatness lies in its openness to the ideas of change and inclusiveness, no matter how reluctant at times certain constituencies seem to be. As one who grew up in a multicultural and multiracial/ethnic environment at home in the South End ghetto of “mixed multitudes,” and went on to study at the Boston Latin School where I was always the only black in my class, and where I never heard a favorable reference to anyone black, I have known what it means to “hide the heart that bleeds.” Yet I have also seen the slow, perceptible, relentless fact of constructive change in America, especially within the academic community, encouraged by committed, learned women and men of all races who want to move us beyond the politics of racial difference.

In a recent issue of the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (May 26, 1993), for example, the feature article, “New History of America Attempts to Make Good on the Claims of Multiculturalism,” considers Ronald Takaki’s book, *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America*.<sup>18</sup> Here a Japanese-American attempts to inscribe a larger narrative based on the settlement and contributions of Chinese, Irish, Native Americans, and blacks. His efforts join and build on those of Boston University’s Howard Zinn and the

<sup>18</sup> Ronald Takaki, *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America* (New York: Little, Brown & Co., 1993).

church historian Justo L. González in his *Out of Every Tribe and Nation*.<sup>19</sup> González gives a helpful report of our five-year multiethnic/multiracial theological dialogue on the Christian story as our collective adapted story. Such developments attest to higher education's rising to the challenge of multiculturalism in an effort to move beyond the politics of difference and forge a new spirit of inquiry and common national identity.

#### CHRISTIAN MISSION AND THE BIBLICAL MULTICULTURAL IMPERATIVE

I would be remiss if I did not address the pedagogical challenge that the ancient text of the Bible poses to those of us who teach within explicitly Christian academic settings. For too long in America, Christian educational institutions have defined themselves along the narrow lines of doctrinal or denominational purity and racial/ethnic homogeneity. It is a sad commentary that any number of so-called Christian institutions of learning have been organized to avoid the challenge of racial pluralism, despite extensive evidence from the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament that resoundingly affirms universalism, racial and ethnic pluralism, and compassion and justice for the alien and the stranger.

In part one of *Troubling Biblical Waters* and part two of *Stony the Road We Trod*, extensive documentation is offered of the African, Afro-Asiatic, and European presence in the Bible. This racial and ethnic pluralism of the Bible constitutes one of the most eloquent testimonies to its perennial authority for the church and society at large. For some, this message of the Bible's own multiculturalism, especially significant in the New Testament, is surprising indeed. For them, intervening centuries of Western art have crowded out the biblical vision of racial and ethnic inclusiveness and divine fairness to people irrespective of their outward appearance and station in life. A litany of supportive biblical texts is easy to provide: Genesis 2:10-14; 9; Exodus 2; Isaiah 11:11, 18; Psalms 68:31; 87:1-4; Zechariah 3:10; Matthew 2:15; 8:11 (cf. Luke 13:29); 12:42 (cf. Luke 11:31); Acts 2:9-10; 8:26-40; 13:1; 18:24; and Revelation 7:9. While such passages can certainly be used to urge Christians to overcome the modern exploitation of the politics of difference, we must concede that appeals based on the Bible alone often fall on deaf ears. There is a more basic reason for all to heed the biblical imperative on racial inclusiveness—self-interest and our collective future survival.

<sup>19</sup> Justo L. González, *Out of Every Tribe and Nation: Christian Theology at the Ethnic Round Table* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992).

What the Bible has to say about racial pluralism, justice, and inclusiveness is nothing short of an ancient blueprint for building bridges between people instead of "dividing walls of hostility" (Eph. 2:11-22). In this regard, multiculturalism is important and mandated not just because it corrects past harm (compensatory justice) but also because it reduces future harm (cumulative justice) not only for the one who is the object of racism and marginalization, but also for the one who, however unwittingly or intentionally, perpetuates racism. Of course, the alternative is not to replace a Eurocentric cultural hegemony with an Africanist or Oriental cultural hegemony. Rather, what is most desirable, especially at Christian colleges and seminaries, is that Bible scholars and theologians embrace more fully a new spirit of academic critical inquiry about past abuses and omissions together with a resolve to help all of our students forge a new sense of collective pride in what it truly means to be Christian and part of the common American citizenry.

# Can “Sustainability” Be Sustained? A Review Essay of John B. Cobb, Jr.’s *Sustainability*<sup>1</sup>

by MAX L. STACKHOUSE

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THERE IS little doubt about it: ecological/environmental awareness is one of the three great entrees into cross-cultural thinking today. Along with human rights and the emergence of a pervasive matrix of global economic interdependence, the issue of the future of the biophysical planet in relationship to the future of civilization poses a basic theological-ethical question as to whether there are common problems that demand concerted human attention beyond the particularities of culture, class, ethnicity, nationality, and gender.

Contemporary humanity faces, in such issues, the question of whether we, as a species, have enough access to universalistic principles not only to confront and constrain recalcitrant abusers of the cosmos and the neighbor, but to guide and shape the whole of what appears to be an emerging, single cosmopolitan civilization—although it is likely to be the most diverse and culturally pluralistic civilization that ever existed. All who hold that the whole of reality is rooted in, guided by, and accountable to a God who alone is truly universal and fully just will be interested in how theological ethics treats these issues.

To be sure, these are not the only issues that press us toward global thinking. Other pervasive motifs intrude into our local preoccupations in spite of the recent fascination with contextual differences and the often dogmatic suspicion that we are all so trapped in our own social or cultural, linguistic or sexual identities that we cannot understand each other, let alone make any sort of “objective” claims about morality or the human condition.

For example, issues of “international law” have been under debate since at least the Council of Constance in 1415 and have taken on more and more importance with the emergence of the World Court, the United Nations, and enormous webs of contract, patent, criminal, and multilateral trade agreements; the “new world order,” a phrase coined by Cicero as I recall, has been revived episodically in political debates since the fall of feudalism

<sup>1</sup> John B. Cobb, Jr., *Sustainability: Economics, Ecology, and Justice* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1992).

and has received fresh attention in the last decade as we move beyond a bipolar world of superpowers; and while no one doubts the culturally embedded origins of modern science, questions as to whether science is too "Western" to be universal are only debated by those who ignore how rapidly and eagerly computer technology is adopted and adapted into every culture given access to it. Indeed, even the worldwide demand for movies, tapes, and videos suggests at least the high permeability and at most the pervasive character of some levels of human sensibilities in what some want to see as radically distinct and encapsulated.<sup>2</sup> These areas too raise the question of whether there are, and whether modern humanity can reliably know whether there are, general norms and principles that do, or should, or could guide the common life.

However, for many, the commonalities exemplified in law, politics, science, technology, and culture seem artificial and subject to distortion by greed and imperial impulse. Ecology, on the other hand, seems to have a *prima facie* priority, even a kind of moral purity about it, for it is to "nature" that many appeal if they want to show that some aspect of life is "really real" or truly normative. Indeed, if it turns out that if this or that philosophy (or theology) evokes, promotes, or reinforces a human tendency to violate what is natural, many suspect that the matter is settled. To call something "natural" is, for many today, to enter the court of final appeal. It is striking that "earth day" is the chief contribution of our generation to the liturgical calendar.

Among contemporary theologians, John B. Cobb, Jr., Professor Emeritus at the School of Theology at Claremont and the founding director of the Center for Process Studies, has contemplated the place of nature in theology as much as any other major thinker. As is widely recognized, he is a philosophical theologian willing to ask basic metaphysical and moral questions and to engage in a close dialogue with the natural and social sciences just as many seem to be retreating from these conversations.

He established himself with a flurry of publications in the 1960s celebrating process theology—*Varieties of Protestantism* (1960), *Living Options in Protestant Theology* (1962), *A Christian Natural Theology* (1965), *The Structure of Christian Existence* (1967), and *God and the World* (1969), all from Westminster Press.

<sup>2</sup> See the skeptical treatment of these developments by Richard J. Barnet and John Cavanaugh, *Global Dreams: Imperial Corporations and the New World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994).



But near the end of the 1960s Cobb underwent a conversion.<sup>3</sup> It is not that he departed from process thought, but that he seemed to confront a crisis in the world that challenged at least his previous understanding of it, a crisis that he could not easily digest without altering his trajectory of theory. Process thought, as he has helped me to understand it, is centered in the effort to think through all the basic metaphysical, moral, epistemological, and theological issues from the standpoint of evolutionary developmentalism. With Aristotle's opposition to Plato standing in the distant background, and deeply influenced by Hegel and Darwin as well as by the bustling energy of earlier American optimism, all is conceived of in terms of a dynamic flow as interacting parts rise into existence and dissolve by their inevitable organic and aesthetic responsiveness to one another and to the emerging and progressive whole that they constitute. Ultimately, it is the becoming of God.

But, as Cobb recounts on the first page of *Sustainability*, he was prompted by his son, Cliff, to read Paul Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb*, and was shaken by it. He admits that it is "a potboiler," filled with "exaggerations and errors," yet it appears to have prompted a doubt that the whole historical, organic, interactive, aesthetic dynamic of progress was benign, that it would survive, or even that it could lead to a wider human flourishing. Indeed, Ehrlich predicts catastrophe. The dynamic, emerging process was leading to death and destruction.

What Cobb confronted seems to be more than another American jeremiad and more than another Malthusian meditation. It was at least the reality of sin, traditionally a weak point of process optimism—a defect under continued discussion by, for example, Marjorie Suchocki, in many ways Cobb's heir as a leader of process thought.<sup>4</sup> Closely related, it is also possible that he also began to suspect that apocalyptic thought had some validity, a suspicion that process thought was designed to overcome, for apocalyptic thought held to a dualism—although civilizations shall be shattered and the earth shall fall to pieces and life shall come to an end, another, truer, more real reality remains.

We leave to one side, for this review, extended reflections on the relationship of apocalyptic thinking to modern liberal theology generally, but it

<sup>3</sup> See a parallel account in Cobb's "Intellectual Autobiography," *Religious Studies Review* 19 (1993): 9-11; and the reviews of his contributions by Delwin Brown and Linell Cady in *Religious Studies Review* 19 (1993): 11-17.

<sup>4</sup> See Marjorie Suchocki, *The End of Evil: Process Eschatology in Historical Perspective* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988).

is an issue worthy of some attention. Certainly the United States has been well supplied with catastrophic texts, many of which are couched in scientific language, yet seem to attract the attention of major theologians. Any decent list would surely have to include Rachel L. Carson's *Silent Spring*, Meadows and Meadows' *Limits to Growth*, Robert Heilbroner's *An Inquiry into the Human Prospect*, Jeremy Rifkin's *Entropy*, Jonathan Shell's *Nuclear Winter*, and perhaps Gibson Winter's *Nuclearism*. It is at least intriguing that theologians and pastors who would not be caught dead referring to *The Late, Great Planet Earth* seem impelled to believe that the more dramatically we portray the gaping jaws of hell environmentally the more likely a return to the righteousness of yesterday.

And how fascinating that so many see the source of the ills in those social, economic, legal, and technological developments that have roots in the transcendental, even dualist, thought that God is other than the world, and that in our obedience to God we may be called upon to change the world. It is indeed a crisis if those theologians who press toward monism discover that they have no place to go when the material world begins to look unreliable.

The little book under review here contains an account of Cobb's encounter with the limits of nature and history, and of his pilgrimage into a new activist, pro-ecological stance. The argument is, in outline, simple: Nature and history and divinity are bound together in one seamless web, they are under threat, they must be saved, we must save them, and we can do so by returning to a premodern world! The fuller argument is subtle, careful, and complex.

He presents in *Sustainability* a narrative version of the argument that is more systematically developed in his joint work with Herman E. Daly and his son Cliff: *For The Common Good: Redirecting the Economy toward Community, the Environment, and a Sustainable Future*.<sup>5</sup> It now appears that this work is his masterwork, the main message that he wants to leave to the church, the public, and the next generation of scholars. And it is more than intriguing that he wrote it with Daly, the long-term ecologist-economist who is known for a quarter century of intense criticism of mainstream economic theory. *Sustainability*, based on various lectures and talks, is the short, popular version of this massive effort.

<sup>5</sup> Herman E. Daly and John B. Cobb, Jr., with Clifford W. Cobb, *For the Common Good: Redirecting the Economy toward Community, the Environment, and a Sustainable Future* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989).

What is theologically interesting is that, in spite of a number of nods to other issues, the governing motif of these works is the structural threat to the biosphere, and thus about how to re-integrate humanity into the "natural" order. Although not fully sympathetic with everything that some of the "deep ecologists" or "Gaia theorists" advocate, these works stand, more than any other works I know, as theological manifestos for an American Green Movement—one book is in a more academic form for the university and seminary, the other in a more confessional mode for the church and community study group. Various parts or implications of this position are also finding their way into a variety of pastor-oriented journals, as can be seen in Cobb's arguments against free trade in *Theology and Public Policy*,<sup>6</sup> his exchanges with Dennis P. McCann in *The Christian Century* over NAFTA,<sup>7</sup> and his debates with Robin Klay in *Perspectives* over GATT.<sup>8</sup>

Of central concern throughout are problems of resource depletion, of the disappearing ozone layer, and of the greenhouse effect; but these broaden to include agriculture, population, and tax and land-use policies. As these are presently structured, they are all seen as obviously threatening to the human future in the long run and to the quality of life in the short run. And the chief cause of this evil is the pressure for economic growth, an evil fomented by mainline economics, the dominant political parties, the multinational corporations, and international trade agreements, all of which are dominated by false philosophies.

Cobb is a true intellectual. Indeed, it is refreshing to find a social critic who takes ideas seriously. He thinks they make a difference and are not simply the by-products of social location. Thus, failures in economic, political, and ecological life are due to failures of a philosophical, ethical, and theological sort. Especially culpable here are abstract modes of thought (accusations of the "fallacy of misplaced concreteness" appear frequently) that are rooted in dualistic metaphysics that separate history from nature, self from society, God from the world, or theory from practice. In these arguments, Cobb's views overlap with the democratic-socialist views that

<sup>6</sup> John B. Cobb, "Against Free Trade," *Theology and Public Policy* 4, no. 2 (Fall 1992): 4-16.

<sup>7</sup> Dennis P. McCann and John B. Cobb, Jr., "Serenity, Courage and Wisdom in the Global Market: An Exchange on NAFTA," *The Christian Century* 110 (November 10, 1993): 1129-1141.

<sup>8</sup> John B. Cobb, Jr., "Ethics, Economics, and Free Trade," *Perspectives* 6, no. 2 (February 1991): 12-15; Robin Klay, "Liberating Thoughts about the Ethics of Exchange and Trade," *Perspectives* 7, no. 8 (October 1992): 10-13; John B. Cobb, Jr., "Response to Robin Klay," *Perspectives* 7, no. 10 (December 1992): 10-11.

have dominated most religious interpretations of contemporary economic life for a generation.<sup>9</sup>

Other preoccupations of the church over the last couple of decades have focused on development policies, poverty, the changing roles of women, and the merits of socialism. Most attempt to include the neglected and impoverished peoples of the world and to find a just pattern for life in the midst of growing international interdependence. Whether one bends toward the liberationist options of mainline Protestant leaders such as Walter L. Owensby or Audrey R. Chapman, with their contempt for contemporary directions,<sup>10</sup> or toward the democratic-capitalist options of Catholic Michael Novak or evangelical Amy Sherman, who suggest that ecumenical Protestantism has abandoned (or failed to ground deeply enough) its own best legacies in economic thought,<sup>11</sup> most economists and theological commentators seek wider economic development for the sake of justice, inclusiveness, and human well-being. These imply growth. Certainly no politician can argue against these today and hope to be elected in any democratic procedure.

Cobb focuses the discussion elsewhere and, without being overtly confrontive about it, challenges them all. The question, thus, is whether he or they are on the right track. He clearly opposes the present steps toward the globalization of the economy, for he believes that it will damage the poor in developing countries, reduce the political will to upgrade welfare in the United States, make it more and more difficult for political power to control the corporations, and most particularly exacerbate those pressures for growth that will degrade the environment.<sup>12</sup> His views are shared among some social activists who are close to the North American unions, in spite of the fact that many economists, by far the majority, have argued that the analyses to which Cobb and the unions appeal are questionable. Indeed, that is the substance of a very carefully documented critique of Daly and

<sup>9</sup> See Mark Ellingsen, *The Cutting Edge: How Churches Speak on Social and Ethical Issues* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1993); Ronald H. Preston, *Religion and the Ambiguities of Capitalism* (London: SCM Press, 1991); and Robert L. Stivers, ed., *Reformed Faith and Economics* (Lanham: University Press of America, by arrangement with the Advisory Council on Church and Society of the Presbyterian Church [U.S.A.], 1989).

<sup>10</sup> See Walter L. Owensby, *Economics for Prophets: A Primer on Concepts, Realities, and Values in Our Economic System* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988); and Audrey R. Chapman, *Faith, Power and Politics: Political Ministry in Mainline Churches* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1991).

<sup>11</sup> See Michael Novak, *The Catholic Ethic and the New Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Free Press, 1993); and Amy Sherman, *Preferential Option: A Christian and Neoliberal Strategy for Latin America's Poor* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992).

<sup>12</sup> See the summary of these arguments in Cobb, "Against Free Trade," 4-16.



Cobb's work by the noted ethicist-economist, Daniel Finn, delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Christian Ethics in January of 1994.<sup>13</sup>

The core issues, however, are not only those of getting the data straight or about the best ways to calculate the probable consequences of this or that development or policy. These are important, but they are not ordinarily the dimensions of economic or ecological analysis in which theologians or pastors make their greatest contributions. In fact, the bulk of that debate is often best left to the professional economists, from whom clergy can learn a good deal if they pay close enough attention to learn the difference between sound and shaky arguments.

The core issues that properly concern theologians and pastors, as Cobb knows, have to do with the kind of theological-ethical glasses one wears as one attempts to discern the moral and spiritual meanings of the data, to see in what respects they comport with our deepest understanding of how God wants us to live in the world. And Cobb has been in the process of regrinding his glasses for some time. If he is to be challenged in theological-ethical circles, this is the area that will have to be taken into consideration.

He has obviously been influenced much by Lynn White's "The Historical Roots of the Environmental Crisis." This often-reprinted essay attributed the greater part of the environmental crisis to the triumph of technology in the "Christian West." This development was itself generated by a culture infused with the notion of a transcendent, sovereign God who commands humanity to till the garden and to name the beasts. In other words, "having dominion" is the source of the crises we face. Against this tradition, White advocates a recovery of the ethic of St. Francis, a new communion with the birds and beasts (although the idea that Francis preaches to the animals in part because he wants to convert them is lost on White).

Such writings brought Cobb to reject ever the more firmly the "dualism of history and nature, of mind and matter" that, he believes, led to "the most fundamental distortion contributed by Christianity"—anthropocentrism, the idea that God was and we should be primarily concerned with humanity's salvation. And it allowed him to see more clearly the implications of ecological thinking that had been present in his teachers, Alfred North Whitehead and Bernard Meland, but that he had not previously seen.

Still more, he found a number of conversation companions, themselves

<sup>13</sup> Daniel Finn, "International Trade and Sustainable Community: On the Bioregional Critique of Mainstream Economics," *Journal of Religious Ethics* (forthcoming).



also widely recognized scholars who have played a continuing role in his thought. Of special importance has been David Griffin who has attempted to join process thought to contemporary liberation and postmodernist critiques of enlightenment rationality; Paulo Solieri, the "archologist" or philosophical visionary of architectural design who has attempted in both theoretical and practical terms to use contemporary technology to construct human habitats friendly to ecology; and the Australian biologist Charles Birch, with whom he wrote *The Liberation of Life: From the Cell to the Community*.<sup>14</sup> Charles Birch became one of the leading figures in framing and guiding the World Council of Churches Conference on Faith, Science and the Future that was held at MIT in 1979, which focused on the quest for a "just peace and sustainable" society—one now replaced by the title "justice, peace and the integrity of creation." Cobb's renewed accent on "sustainability," rather than on the highly ambiguous "integrity of creation," is significant. (Is the integrity actual, ideal, eschatological, or what?)

It is under the influence of these conversations that Cobb has come to believe that we stand on the brink of disaster.

We now see that in much of the world efforts to improve the quality of life have done as much harm as good. Improved medical care, new agricultural methods, and humanitarian aid in times of crisis have greatly increased population without enabling the masses of people to rise above the subsistence level. Education has raised expectations and heightened dissatisfaction without improving the capacity of people to deal with their real problems. Technology combined with increased population has speeded up the processes of environmental deterioration so that the capacity of the land to support people in the long run has diminished. Global trade has made survival dependent on increasingly precarious arrangements.

Thus, he speaks of an urgent need for a drastic change in how we live. We need to face the fact, he says, that we live in a world of limits; we need to form a society that is both "in balance with other species and [based] primarily on the renewable resources of the planet." Therefore, we need to undertake a "disengagement from the system of acquiring and maintaining property and from all the values and involvements associated with it." We also need to exercise a new rigorous frugality. This means, among other

<sup>14</sup> Charles Birch and John B. Cobb, Jr., *The Liberation of Life: From the Cell to the Community* (London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

things, the designation of local "bio-regions," areas where self-sufficient eco-economic systems can develop on their own, in harmony with their natural environment. This notion itself, however, is very difficult, for it is not at all clear what a self-sufficient bio-region would look like in a day of complex communications and technology, or in a day when Europe, South-east Asia, southern Africa and the Americas are moving toward greater eco-economic interdependence.

Cobb's purpose is to evoke a commitment to a new lifestyle and a new society. He wants the church to become a part of a new communitarianism, a kind of localism that is willing to drop out of, even resist, the wider global developments that are today widely evident but that in his judgment are provoking disaster. At the same time, he wants to abandon the supernaturalist dimensions of Christianity so that we can more easily resonate to the naturalist impulses present in our material life and engage in a closer dialogue with the world religions such as Buddhism that do not have a focus on a transcendent God.

One can almost hear him say, "Come home, come home to the simple life, to the gentler days of villages, farming, and front porch swings." One hears echoes of Ruskin's nostalgia for the harmony of the medieval manor in contrast to the din of modern factories, or of James' preference for the Virgin over the dynamo as the central symbol of power in society, or of Schumacher's "small is beautiful" against the "great industrial city." At its best, Cobb has made a powerful case for the "Prairie Home Companion"; at its most frightening worse, he touches on themes that led Pol Pot to his violent deconstruction of every tendency toward modernization. Throughout, one feels the mandate: "Forward to the nineteenth century!"

How fascinating that, on many points, Cobb joins a number of leading thinkers who have pressed for what can only be called an increased disengagement from the dominant institutions of contemporary life, as if we live already in a new "dark ages." Yet, he and many others simultaneously if disjunctively call for a new drive to control people by political means. Should we seek a post-communist command economy to control technological development, to make the corporations subject to the nation-state, to prevent globalization from disrupting local cultures, to stop, even to deconstruct all that presses toward cosmopolitan growth?

One can agree that new levels of stewardship are required in regard to the biophysical universe. Our increased capacity to alter our environment demands a corresponding level of accountability. Surely it is true that we need at least as many specialized farms and controlled environments to

protect endangered species as we need facilities to develop new species through bioengineering. There is, no longer, any way of ducking the responsibility for taking care of our world. And one can appreciate the massive effort that Cobb has made, with his colleagues and companions, to grasp a sense of the whole. They are thoughtful and without a discernible trace of malicious intent.

It is also possible to see how those who thought, over the last generation, that something like liberation economics would be the wave of the future and who remain hostile to or puzzled by current developments, would be attracted to a vision such as this one. Few have tried anything like this in regard to theology, economy, and ecology. He deserves to be read and studied. As one student remarked in a class discussing his work, "this is worth a whole semester."

But in the final analysis, I think we should not follow this direction. And I do not think we should follow it for two related reasons. One is theological, the other is social-ethical. I think that Cobb, like many today, is confused theologically about the nature of nature. It is not necessary to reject everything that comes from the Enlightenment to point out that it conflated the terms "creation" and "nature." Since then, when we speak of nature, we ordinarily mean the biophysical universe, with the implicit understanding that its patterns and dynamics are the ultimate frame of reference, the way God wants things to be. In the attempt to avoid a transcendence that becomes dualistic, Cobb is tempted to a naturalistic, geocentric monism that loses theological and thus also human amplitude. Both the height and the depth are obscured.

In contrast, when one speaks of "creation," one signals that the biophysical universe is not the whole or the norm, but a temporal artifact that is subject to norms and ends that are beyond it. Indeed, the notion of "fallen nature" suggests that, while traces of God's law and purposes are inevitably scripted into the deep character of all that is, the natural things of the world are out of order or confused of direction in one or another respect. It is not that finitude is by itself evil but, rather, that finite reality has betrayed its original design and goal. To gear ourselves only into nature, thus, is to degenerate further. This is how we know that the *status quo* is not as it should be, and why reverting to the *status quo ante* is no solution. Nature, including human nature, can only be rightly ordered and fulfilled by being transformed through a conversion, a sanctification, marked by crucifixion and resurrection, a "creative destruction" that brings a new kind and quality of existence.

This classic theological insight has been obscured or rejected by many

current developments in theology, but the costs may be extremely high, for its implications may well be true not only of personal moral and spiritual life, but of the entire biophysical cosmos as well. The scriptural tradition states this in revealing images. There is no return to the simpler garden. That path is cut off by unassailable powers of destruction. Instead, the future is toward the universal city for all peoples, to which and for which the creatures, plants, and even the river of life are to be redesigned. Nature, in other words, has to be transformed to be what God intended it to be, to accord with standards that are not complete in nature itself.

Cobb wants to overcome all unnecessary tensions between culture and nature, and to see both theologically. With this, I am in full accord. But his theological program tends to make economy into local culture, press culture toward nature, and identify nature's becoming with the divine. It simply is not clear how this immanentization of God could prove to be capable of facing the central demand of our time—to use the technology that is now on the horizon to transform nature in ways that enhance the global structures of a graceful, cosmopolitan civilization able to serve the whole of humanity. This would demand a loving, just, and stewardly dominion of nature, for the sake of humanity and in service of God. It is doubtful that the tendency to a monistic naturalism implicit in process thought or in biospheric thinking, or in them in combination, can prompt us to accept this vocation or to discern how that ought to be done.

This theological point would, to be heard in our world, have to defend itself against the charge that it is the source of all our ills. But that case becomes easier to make on simply empirical grounds as data about the ecologically devastating conditions in both traditional, pretechnological societies and in the antitheological socialist societies of the former Eastern European countries becomes available. It is still not quite acceptable to say so, but the accusation that transcendental and conversionary theism generally and Christianity particularly are the primary source of our environmental ills (as well as of colonialism, imperialism, militarism, poverty, and the oppression of minorities and women), as many are saying today, is an argument of escalating rhetorical influence, but of declining credibility. The damage to ecology and to populations wreaked by the most anti-Christian regimes of Eastern Europe and the non-Christian regions is inestimable.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, the European press has more widely reported than the U.S. press the World Health Organization's finding that "nowhere in

<sup>15</sup> See, e.g., Paul Kennedy, *Preparing for the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Random House, 1993).



the history of humanity have the air, the land, the water and the people been more systematically poisoned" than in Eastern Europe, and the deepest ecological/economic crisis areas of Africa, Latin America, and Asia—or for that matter, of Europe and America—can hardly be said to be those most influenced by a pervasive commitment to a transcendent God. It appears to be the case, indeed, that monistic, naturalist, and humanistic worldviews are the ones that most dramatically degrade both the biosphere and humanity.

Finally, let me draw attention to a frightening although unintended social-ethical implication of this work. It is doubtful whether Cobb has yet tried to imagine what it would take to actualize his vision. Most conscientious, committed, concerned, thoughtful people do not believe his and Daly's analysis of how things are or how they ought to be. But, for the moment, let us presume that it is, say, 60 percent correct—too high in my judgment, but not a bad percentage for a theological ethic trying to work with vast themes and complex data and adequate to our thought experiment. How will people be persuaded to live in the ways he suggests? One can imagine anabaptist-like subcultures or kibbutzim, perhaps neo-monastic experiments, or a new burst of 1960s-like communes as experimental efforts. And these perhaps ought to be tried. They certainly have had an effect in the past, and perhaps over several generations, these could shape some new directions.

But one would expect that for the most part they would be grandly ignored. Yet, if the situation is as dire as Cobb says it is, action must be taken now. And this is the problem: the measures he proposes would and could only be enforced at the cost of massive violations of human rights, and by dismantling the fragile but promising structures of technological know-how, international law, trade, and communication by which we are building up a still-feeble sense of what it means to be a single humanity on a single globe, under God and responsible for a common world. The ethical task of our generation may well be to engage in the formation of a cosmopolitan civilization on a more genuinely reformed and genuinely catholic basis. It may be true that our religious traditions are part of the problem, but the problem may lie less in an overweening zeal for transcendence than in the localistic immanentism of American religion, the fissiparous sectarian impulses in much of Protestantism, and the anti-institutional instincts of today's residual romanticism.

Suppose at the very least that people do not want to become communarians or return to the farm or trade only in their assigned bioregions.



Suppose some become convinced of their obligation to advocate free trade, and to nurture the formation of corporations that reach around the globe in order to supply goods and services in the quantity and quality that they believe best serve others and generate capital to meet future challenges. Suppose people do not want to stay in their valleys or in their villages, and think that it is their calling to find a place in the global city. What would it take to stop this, as Cobb wishes? It is only a slight exaggeration to say that, as some would have put Quakers in charge of the Pentagon to solve the arms race a generation ago, Cobb's proposals prompt us to try to imagine the Amish in charge of the globe's economic future—although he wants less to arrest the development of technology than to use technology to arrest development.

Nevertheless, we at least face a big problem if people do not believe that this analysis of the situation is correct, and do not think that the conceptual framework on which the analysis is based is faithful religiously, accurate socioeconomically, correct ecologically, or justifiable ethically. A key problem in the latter regard is that to enforce these provisions would lead us in the direction of a massive exercise of coercive authority. Other scholars who have similar views to Cobb's have begun to speak quite openly about the necessity of a new tyranny, even to speak favorably of the issue of the Chinese cultural revolution.<sup>16</sup> The failure to face this prospect is one of the most critical failures of the volume, a fatal exercise of misplaced concreteness if there ever was one.

In the final analysis, the processes of this world must be seen in the context of a wider and deeper ecology, for ethical, practical, and especially soteriological reasons. Transformation is required. Sustainability in this model is not likely to be sustainable.

<sup>16</sup> See, e.g., Garrett Hardin, *Living within Limits: Ecology, Economics and Population Taboos* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); and Donald Worster, *The Wealth of Nature: Environmental History and the Ecological Imagination* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994). Worster argues, incidentally, that the causes of our modern crisis are not transcendental religion or dualism, but "secularism" with its peculiar definitions of and relation to "progress and reason."

# Bruce Metzger as Textual Critic

by JAMES A. BROOKS

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BRUCE MANNING METZGER is a scholar of many different interests and abilities, a polymath in an area of scholarship more commonly pursued by narrow specialists. A perusal of his bibliography reveals works on Bible translation, Old Testament apocrypha, Dead Sea Scrolls, New Testament bibliography, Hellenistic Greek, New Testament Introduction, biblical exegesis, New Testament apocrypha, the text of the New Testament, including all the ancient versions, New Testament canon, Patristics, ancient mystery religions, and modern Christian cults.<sup>1</sup> His greatest contributions to scholarship, however, have almost certainly been in the area of New Testament textual criticism.

The editors of the 1981 *Festschrift* in his honor offered a warmly appreciative and well-deserved characterization of him as a scholar and a colleague.<sup>2</sup> The following remarks will attempt a brief assessment of Professor Metzger's impact upon the discipline with which his name is inextricably linked wherever he is known.

## HIS SIGNIFICANCE TO THE FIELD

Professor Metzger's significance as a New Testament textual critic may be appreciated from a number of perspectives. First, the enormity of his output has been surpassed by few in the field. His first text-critical article appeared in 1943; now, a half-century later, his still-growing bibliography encompasses more than seventy-five entries on that subject alone. More importantly, the quantity of his work is more than matched by its quality: it is consistently careful, accurate, patient, thorough, and fair. Second, he has dealt with virtually every aspect of textual criticism.<sup>3</sup> It is difficult to think

<sup>1</sup> See *New Testament Textual Criticism: Its Significance for Exegesis: Essays in Honour of Bruce M. Metzger*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp and Gordon D. Fee (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), xix-xxviii. This bibliography is brought up to date at the end of this article.

<sup>2</sup> Epp and Fee, *New Testament Textual Criticism*, v-vii.

<sup>3</sup> Apparent exceptions might be the collation of manuscripts and study of textual relationships, but these are dealt with in his doctoral dissertation and first book based upon it, and in his contributions of manuscript data to: *The Gospel according to St. Luke*, parts 1-2, ed. The American and British Committees of the International Greek New Testament Project, *The New Testament in Greek 3* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984-87). In addition, his often-cited 1945 article on "The Caesarean Text of the Gospels" (*Journal of Biblical Literature* 64 [1945]: 457-489) made an important point regarding the methodology of studying textual relationships.

of anyone in the history of the discipline who has written on a broader range of topics—with corresponding depth—than Bruce Metzger. Third, as a man of the church who has exhibited reverence and reserve in sometimes controversial technical studies, his scholarship has been accompanied by practical application. This is especially seen in his editorship of and work on the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, and his participation on the United Bible Societies editorial committee. Finally, he is a teacher and mentor as well as a scholar. In addition to the pedagogical concerns evident in many of his writings, he has also taken a personal interest in and inspired a number of students to follow him in textual criticism and other disciplines, and has been a source of encouragement to countless others.

#### HIS MAJOR PUBLICATIONS ON TEXTUAL CRITICISM

Pride of place in any discussion of Professor Metzger's many publications must surely go to the trilogy published by Oxford University Press: *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*;<sup>4</sup> *The Early Versions of the New Testament: Their Origin, Transmission, and Limitations*;<sup>5</sup> and *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance*.<sup>6</sup> These are the volumes for which he is best known, and through which he probably has exercised the most influence.

In 1964 there was no satisfactory handbook on the subject of textual criticism in English. The volumes by A. T. Robertson, Leon Vaganay, and F. G. Kenyon were out of date, and those by Alexander Souter (revised by C. S. C. Williams) and Vincent Taylor were very brief. (J. H. Greenlee's helpful but also somewhat brief volume was published the same year as Metzger's first edition). *The Text of the New Testament* quickly became the standard handbook and had no serious rival until the publication of the English edition of Kurt and Barbara Aland's *Text of the New Testament* in 1987. Even then it was not displaced and has continued to be used widely, with an updated third edition appearing in 1992.

*The Early Versions of the New Testament* may be considered one of Metzger's most important works. The study covers the major ancient versions in unparalleled depth, and gives attention to all the minor versions (such as the Thracian and the Sogdian) as well. In addition to consideration of the origin, history, characteristics, manuscripts, editions, and textual affinities of each version, a unique feature is a section on the limitations of most of

<sup>4</sup> New York: Oxford University Press, 1964; 2d ed., 1968; 3d enlarged ed., 1992.

<sup>5</sup> New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.

<sup>6</sup> Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987.

the versions in reconstructing the original text of the Greek New Testament, written by experts in the language of each version. This volume quickly replaced Arthur Vööbus' 1954 survey as the standard work on the subject, and today it has no rival.

The third member of the trilogy, *The Canon of the New Testament*, exhibits a typical Metzgerian concern for thoroughness with regard to both content and bibliography. Widely acknowledged as the authoritative treatment of the formation of the canon, it is notable for its attention to theological as well as historical questions, including a discussion of the relationship between textual variation and canonicity.

A fourth Oxford publication, *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible: An Introduction to Palaeography*,<sup>7</sup> may be viewed as a junior partner to this trilogy. In this volume Metzger treats Septuagint as well as New Testament manuscripts (and thereby exemplifies his consistent concern always to treat New Testament textual criticism in its larger historical context<sup>8</sup>). Probably the most valuable feature is the section containing descriptions and facsimiles of forty-five noteworthy manuscripts.

Metzger's numerous essays reveal another distinctive and characteristic aspect of his scholarship. They cover an amazing range of subjects, from Patristic textual scholarship to multilingual manuscripts (some in as many as five languages!) to manuscripts with *hermeneiai* (fortune-telling comments in the margins) to the tendency of scribes to provide "names for the nameless" in the New Testament. Always learned and erudite, these contributions often present the last word on subjects that many scholars scarcely know exist.

#### HIS WORK ON THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT

Under the leadership of Eugene A. Nida, the American Bible Society brought together an international group of prominent textual critics in 1955 to prepare an edition of the Greek New Testament; one of the first members was Bruce Metzger. The outcome was *The Greek New Testament*, first published by the United Bible Societies in 1966, the fourth edition of which just appeared in October 1993.<sup>9</sup> Metzger's is one of only two names

<sup>7</sup> New York: Oxford University Press, 1981.

<sup>8</sup> See his article on "Trends in the Textual Criticism of the Iliad and the Mahābhārata, and the New Testament," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 65 (1946): 339-352 (reprinted in *Chapters in the History of New Testament Textual Criticism*, New Testament Tools and Studies 4 [Leiden: E. J. Brill; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1963], 142-154).

<sup>9</sup> *The Greek New Testament*, ed. Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, Bruce M. Metzger, and Allen Wikgren (New York: United Bible Societies, 1966); 4th rev. ed., edited by Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, and Bruce M. Metzger (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft and United Bible Societies, 1993).



associated with the initial stages of the project still to appear in this latest edition. The significance of this labor is not hard to gauge: the form of Greek text that the committee produced is far and away the most widely used in the world today.<sup>10</sup>

In addition to serving for over three and a half decades on the committee responsible for editing the text, Metzger was himself responsible for producing its widely used companion volume, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*. This volume was written "on behalf of and in cooperation with" the editorial committee to explain its textual decisions. In fact, however, the *Commentary* owes more of its shape and content to Metzger than the attributions would indicate. Kurt Aland, the other long-term member of the committee, describes it as "a veritable monument to the most painstaking and detailed kind of work that we have come to expect from Metzger."<sup>11</sup> Professor Metzger is currently at work on a revised edition to accompany the new fourth edition of the Greek text.

### HIS TEXTUAL THEORY

No textual critic works without a theory regarding the transmission of the text, and as we have discussed Professor Metzger's work on the Greek text it is appropriate to mention his approach to textual theory as well. It must be said at the outset that there is nothing unique about Metzger's theoretical understanding of the practice of textual criticism. It is, quite simply, the dominant one, commonly labeled rational or moderate or reasoned eclecticism.<sup>12</sup> That is the theory that was employed in producing the Bible Societies' Greek text, and that lies behind the Greek text translated by most recent English versions, including the Revised Standard Version, New Revised Standard Version, New English Bible, Revised English Bible, New American Bible, New American Standard Bible, New International Version, Good News Bible, and, to a slightly lesser extent, the Jerusalem Bible and the New Jerusalem Bible.

<sup>10</sup> It is the same text as that found in the twenty-sixth edition of the well-known "Nestle-Aland" text, although in a slightly different format. The latter volume also includes a different critical apparatus, prepared under the supervision of Kurt and Barbara Aland with the assistance of the Institut für neutestamentliche Textforschung. For a brief survey of the history of these two texts and the relationship between them, see Moises Silva, "Modern Critical Editions and Apparatuses," in *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the Status Quaestionis*, ed. Bart D. Ehrman and Michael W. Holmes, Studies and Documents 46 (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1984).

<sup>11</sup> Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989), 276.

<sup>12</sup> In contrast to the "thoroughgoing" or "consistent" eclecticism of G. D. Kilpatrick, e.g., or J. K. Elliott.



or more variant readings of a passage, the textual critic should "choose the reading which best explains the origin of the others."<sup>13</sup> In this process of selection, the critic is not to give disproportionate weight to either external<sup>14</sup> or internal evidence.<sup>15</sup> To that extent, no manuscript or group of manuscripts or principle of textual criticism is made determinative; a reasoned explanation is required for each choice.

Insight into Metzger's practice of reasoned eclecticism may be gleaned from his dissenting notes in the *Textual Commentary*. While there are only thirty-two dissenting notes in the approximately two thousand units of variation treated in the commentary, he signed twenty-five of them—far more than the eleven of Allen Wikgren, who has the second-largest number. In fourteen of these Metzger appeals only to internal evidence to support the reading he preferred,<sup>16</sup> and in ten he employs both external and internal evidence in his argument.<sup>17</sup> Only once does he employ external evidence alone.<sup>18</sup> It would therefore appear that he gives somewhat more weight to internal evidence than do the other members of the committee—at least when they differ in their judgments concerning the original text.

That this particular approach to textual criticism prevails today is due in no small measure to Professor Metzger himself. Because of the wide influence of *The Text of the New Testament*<sup>19</sup> (attributable, in large part, to its pedagogical excellence) and of the *Textual Commentary*, an entire generation of textual critics has been trained in the principles and practice of reasoned eclecticism as he understands them.

### HIS INFLUENCE UPON THE NRSV

As is well known, Metzger played a leading role in the production of the NRSV. This applies to the text underlying the translation as well as to the rendering of the text itself. In the preface to the NRSV Metzger has written: "For the New Testament the Committee has based its work on the most

<sup>13</sup> Metzger, *Text*, 206.

<sup>14</sup> I.e., the manuscripts themselves; this stands in contrast to the "majority text" view, which generally chooses the variant supported by the most manuscripts, regardless of other evidence.

<sup>15</sup> I.e., the evidence provided by a consideration of scribal habits and practices, and the style of an author; this stands in contrast to "consistent eclecticism," which considers only this kind of evidence.

<sup>16</sup> Mt. 23:4; Mk. 10:2; Jn. 1:3-4; Acts 2:38, 10:16, 10:17, 25:17, 26:4; 1 Cor. 6:11, 10:2, Gal. 1:15; 1 Thess. 2:7; 1 Pet. 5:10; Rev. 19:11.

<sup>17</sup> Mk. 3:32; Acts 5:28; Rom. 15:37; 2 Cor. 4:6, 4:14, 5:3; Col. 1:22; 1 Pet. 1:12; 2 Pet. 2:11; Jude 5.

<sup>18</sup> Acts 16:12, where the reading of the text is virtually a conjecture.

<sup>19</sup> In addition to appearing in three English editions over the course of twenty-seven years, it has been translated into German, Japanese, and Chinese.

written: "For the New Testament the Committee has based its work on the most recent edition of *The Greek New Testament*. . . Only in very rare instances have we replaced the text or the punctuation of the Bible Societies' edition by an alternative that seemed to us to be superior."<sup>20</sup> The Greek text behind the NRSV, therefore, is the very one that Metzger himself (and Allen Wikgren, also a member of both the United Bible Societies and NRSV committees) helped produce.

Perhaps the most significant textual phenomenon of the NRSV, however, is not the Greek text that was used but the abundance of textual notes that are included in the New Testament—499 according to the present writer's count. This is more than in any other English translation except the Jerusalem Bible and New Jerusalem Bible (which have so many notes of various kinds that they constitute a mini-commentary). One may presume that Professor Metzger took the lead in giving this unusual amount of attention to textual matters,<sup>21</sup> which makes available to English readers some of the fruit of the best textual scholarship.

### CONCLUSION

While Professor Metzger's voluminous output over the past fifty years has been impressive in and of itself, it is particularly extraordinary in light of the circumstances under which it was produced. Bruce Metzger has never been a solitary recluse, concerned only for his own scholarly pursuits. Quite to the contrary, during the five decades over which he helped shape a field of academic research, he served as an active full-time member of the faculty at Princeton Theological Seminary, lecturing to large classes, teaching graduate seminars, serving on committees, and, at the same time, preaching from the pulpit and lecturing around the world to alumni/ae and friends of the Seminary. In his half-century of service to the Seminary, Professor Metzger taught more students than any other professor in the history of the institution, possibly more than any other professor of divinity in the history of the country.

During his years of service, students consistently expressed awe at his

<sup>20</sup> The present writer has located approximately fifteen instances in the Gospels and Acts where it appears that the NSRV has translated a variant: Mk. 7:4, 7:9(?), 12:23; Lk. 9:2, 10:1, 10:17, 11:33, 12:11, 20:45, 24:3, 24:47 (text and punctuation); Acts 5:28, 13:40(?), 16:12.

<sup>21</sup> It is interesting to note that of the eleven readings in the United Bible Societies' Gospels and Acts to which Metzger attached a dissenting note indicating a preference for an alternative reading (see notes 16-18 above), only two of his preferred readings (Acts 5:28 and 16:12) are certainly translated by the NRSV (in four instances a determination cannot be made). It would appear that he did not force his preferences upon the NRSV (or, alternatively, that he changed his mind between the writing of the *Textual Commentary* and the NRSV).

scholarship and gratitude at his willingness to deal with their questions and concerns. Throughout his career, his humane approach to both teaching and research has endeared him to students and colleagues alike, many of whom still consult him on his areas of scholarly expertise, and all of whom continue to revere him as the epitome of the Christian gentleman and scholar.

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This bibliography updates (and occasionally supplements) the bibliography that appeared as pp. xix-xxviii of his 1981 *Festschrift*.<sup>22</sup> Entries are listed by year.

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<sup>22</sup> See n. 1 above.

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# A Tribute to Paul Louis Lehmann

(Sept. 10, 1906–Feb. 27, 1994)

by FLEMING RUTLEDGE

*Senior Associate at Grace Church in New York, the Reverend Fleming Rutledge was a student of Paul Lehmann at Union Theological Seminary (M.Div.). She preached this memorial sermon in Nassau Presbyterian Church in Princeton on March 2, 1994.*

*“WE HAVE this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you.” (2 Corinthians 4:7-12 [KJV])*

In one of Paul Lehmann’s most charming essays, “The Ant and the Emperor,” our beloved friend and teacher pays tribute to the figure whom he never failed to call “Carolus Magnus.” From the Busch compilation of Karl Barth’s personal papers, Paul quotes a reference to “the ‘many visitors’ who, taking no account of Barth’s withdrawal to his favorite hideaway, trooped up to the Bergli [quoting Barth now] ‘like a procession of ants,’ yet they do not seem to have despoiled ‘the quietest and pleasantest holidays in recent memory.’” Paul continues, “Since my name appears among the ants, the memory is more than a little reassuring.”

A few of you (and we know who you are) are emperors yourselves; nevertheless, all of us must feel on this day that *we* are now the procession of ants, come in our turn to offer our small tributes of “awe and esteem, indebtedness and affection” (Lehmann’s words about Barth) to the man who now takes his permanent place among “the very small number of genuine theologians in America” (J. Louis Martyn). Today in Israel a mighty oak is fallen.

The day after Paul Lehmann’s death, I found him in the newspaper. I don’t mean the obituary, for I did not find him dead; I found him living. I found him in the news, where the human story is being told in all its terror and wonder every day. *The New York Times* reporter wrote of the aftermath of a massacre in a tiny luncheonette in the South Bronx, where the survivors of the shooting are still trying to come to terms with the bloody deaths of their relatives and co-workers, all of them poor Mexican immigrants. Nancy Burgos, the sister of one of the victims, said, “We want justice, not just

for ourselves but for other families who have had this in their lives. I see myself as just one person in a million really. I am just a human being." Do we not immediately recognize here the voice of one whose concerns lay at the heart of the lifelong work of Paul Lehmann, who sought with every ounce of his strength until the day he died to discover the ways in which God was at work in the midst of the carnage of this world to make and keep human life human? who was ever proclaiming the activity of God on behalf of the disenfranchised and dispossessed of the earth? whose revolutionary theology, even as it ranged across the whole globe of conflict and struggle, always held the individual victim in view, the one in a million? whose passion for justice was not to be played out solely on ideological battlefields but always was to have a human shape, "a local habitation and a name"?<sup>1</sup> Surely, he has taught us all to read the stories in the newspaper with transfigured understanding, in the light of the shaping and saving power of the biblical story. As Christopher Morse said just this morning, "In a culture of sentimental pieties, both secular and religious, Paul's polemical teaching puts the news back into the Good News." "To discover how to be human now is the reason we follow this star."<sup>2</sup>

Paul has shown us how to maintain what Nancy Duff, in her book about his thought, has called "the running conversation between the Biblical texts and the human situation."<sup>3</sup> He had "the gift of double focus" in so many ways. Above and beyond and around the struggles of the people of Haiti, of South Africa, of Latin America, of ghettos and *favelas* everywhere, he saw that "the mountain was full of chariots and horses of fire round about Elisha. . . . Those that are with us are more than those that are with them" (2 Kings 6:17)—the "politics of transfiguration." His zeal on behalf of the world's oppressed knew no bounds, but it was never a grandiose ideology lacking a human context; he knew the names and family histories of the man who worked in the boiler room and the woman who mopped the floor at night. As he himself writes in *The Decalogue and a Human Future*, Paul saw "the unfailing conjunction of *ultimacy* and *intimacy* which the heart unfailingly requires" (my emphasis).

How often we heard him refer, only half in jest, to the day that we hoped somehow might not arrive, "when I am gathered to my fathers." It was emblematic of his freedom that, whereas he always addressed his lectures to "sisters and brothers," in that order, he never felt the need to alter the old

<sup>1</sup> *A Midsummer Night's Dream* 5.1.17.

<sup>2</sup> W. H. Auden, *For the Time Being: A Christmas Oratorio*.

<sup>3</sup> Nancy J. Duff, *Humanization and the Politics of God: The Koinonia Ethics of Paul Lehmann* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992), 110.

expression to include "mothers and fathers." In view of his perhaps less well-known (in some circles) but nevertheless well-attested enthusiasm for women's interests, it is all the more amusing to recall how, when he was preparing to go down to Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, he would say how much he was looking forward to being in the South where "men are men and women are women and I can tell the difference."

Paul's old-world manners and inclinations were always in enchanting juxtaposition to the sometimes startling modernity and American-ness of his mind. How he loved entertaining and being entertained, good food and good wine, beautiful clothes and beautiful surroundings—though to be sure, in these matters it was hard to tell how much was Paul and how much was Marion. An invitation to "coffee and conversation" at the Lehmanns' afforded an entrance into one of God's more delightful projects of humanization, not to mention those frequent occasions when ardent spirits were served to augment the general joyousness.

How "other-directed" he was! As Lou Martyn says, if he asked you what you were working on, it was because he really wanted to know, not because he wanted you to ask him about himself. He knew the names and stories of all our children. The time he took in writing to friends and students on important occasions, the effort he put into acts of kindness at times of crisis and need took countless hours away from his own work. But in just this way he was acting parabolically, signifying the Father who knows every hair of our heads and every sparrow that falls, the God who, as Paul loved to testify in the words of the Heidelberg Catechism, is our "only comfort in life and in death."

Not more than four years ago, when I had reached an impasse in my Good Friday sermon preparation, I rang him up and asked him to talk to me. He never once failed me in these telephone calls; he had been thinking of these matters all his life. The meaning of Good Friday, he said, is found in the dialectic between the words "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." How well this describes the witness that he and Marion have made these many years since their great tragedy, as Godforsakenness threatened to overwhelm them. The valor and gallantry of their lives in recent years speak vividly to us of the God who, standing even within the shadow, keepeth watch above his own. To the very last days of Paul's sojourn when his pitcher was broken at the fountain, it could have been said by him as by his great namesake, "So then death worketh in us, but life in you." All over the world the children of Paul Lehmann will testify that he has been for us a lifegiver; we will think of him with gratitude and joy not only as we recall his comradeship, but also

and especially as we in our own contexts are called out by the apocalyptic crises of our day to speak the word of truth to power.

Pilate came into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, "Art thou the king of the Jews? . . . What hast thou done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence." Pilate therefore said unto him, "Art thou a king then?" Jesus answered, "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." Pilate saith unto him, "What is truth?"

The unmasking of power by truth! Can any student of Paul Lehmann ever read this passage the same way again? The debate about his exegesis will continue as long as his inheritance is discussed, but there can be no doubt that he has given us a new and revolutionary hermeneutic that has left none of us untouched.

As every student of Professor Lehmann will readily recall, all his classes that began as lectures ended as sermons. The sermon would be beginning about now. His poetic fire would start to kindle. He would begin moving away from the lectern. He would begin prowling up and down the aisle, index fingers stabbing the air, eyes blazing and searching the audience of listeners like Jeremiah searching the streets of Jerusalem for "one that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth" (Jer. 5:1); if that searchlight caught your own gaze, you were hooked. "What is truth?" Truth was never a what, but always a Who. "What hast thou done," Jesus of Nazareth?

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord (Lk. 4:15).

This was the message that seized Paul Lehmann; this was the Lord who had pressed him into service.

This was no perfect person, of course. One may remember even his outsized flaws, however, with some measure of gratitude, in light of the robust Protestant conscience that permitted him a memorable degree of human freedom; we may perhaps associate him, loving paradox as he did, with the famous injunction to "sin boldly." Yet he was no Lutheran in these matters; doubtless he would prefer to be remembered with his own oft-



repeated saying, "Your sins are forgiven; now get with the program!" Paul had so much zest in every direction. One of the greatest joys was to be greeted by him on festival days. It was never a mere, "Merry Christmas!" Rather, there would be a two-fisted handclasp and an ardent, "A blessed and joyous feast of the Lord's Nativity!" And no one could say, "The Lord is risen! He is risen indeed!" with more fervor. You may remember how he loved to tell of the young man who, when coming out of church on Easter morning was utterly confounded to be greeted by the pastor with the words, "The Lord is risen!" and, after a stammer or two, managed to say, "He sure is!" Well, Paul, he sure is.

If Christ has not been raised, our faith is futile and we are still in our sins. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive (1 Cor. 15:14, 20-22).

Paul: you were one in a million. We shall not look upon your like again. Charles Scott speaks for us all: "I count it one of the greatest blessings of my life that I knew Paul Lehmann." Here was a man of Abrahamic stature, a man who said that "on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday I believe; on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday I don't." "O Lord, I believe; help my unbelief." Paul has entered his Sabbath rest. Death shall have no more dominion over him.

Paul was not a poet but a theologian. Yet he *was* a poet. It seems not unfitting to conclude by reading a poem by one of Paul's favorites, W. H. Auden. These are the final stanzas of a poem written *by* a poet *to* a poet:

Follow, poet, follow right  
 To the bottom of the night.  
 With your unconstraining voice,  
 Still persuade us to rejoice;  
 With the farming of a verse  
 Make a vineyard of the curse,  
 Sing of human unsuccess  
 In a rapture of distress;  
 In the deserts of the heart  
 Let the healing fountain start,  
 In the prison of his days,  
 Teach the free man how to praise.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> W. H. Auden, "In Memory of W. B. Yeats."



# The Challenge of Hope

by J. CHRISTIAAN BEKER

*J. Christiaan Beker, the Richard J. Dearborn Professor of New Testament Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary, preached this opening communion sermon in Miller Chapel on January 24, 1994.*

Text: Romans 5:2-3

FOR THE commencement of this new semester, I've chosen a text from Paul's letter to the Romans, which has been significant to my life and, I hope, will be meaningful to you as well. The text is Romans 5, verses 2 and 3: "We boast in our hope of the glory of God; yet not only that, we also boast in our afflictions."

However, before saying something about this text, I want to start with a proper Pauline thanksgiving. To be sure, I will not simply imitate Paul's fervent thanksgiving at the beginning of Romans where he says, "I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you because your faith is proclaimed in all the world." Nevertheless, I want to offer a thanksgiving for everything you students have meant to me during my long teaching career at Princeton Seminary. Now that the end of my career is imminent, I have reflected on the many ways you have taught me: taught me how to listen; surprised me with your enthusiastic and faithful commitment to the ministry; and yes, taught me that in a seminary setting, academic pursuits lose their importance if they cease to be a means to further God's cause in our world. What is especially important to me is the increasing pluralism and diversity in the student body. I am grateful to the diverse constituents who make up our student body; to the various age groups among you; and to the imaginative and the courageous ways in which women have taught me. I especially acknowledge the way in which African-Americans and Asian-Americans have compelled this stubborn Dutchman to open his heart to their life experiences, so different and often so much more difficult than my own.

And so my heart is filled with the hope that this seminary community's faith will indeed be "proclaimed in all the world"; that instead of our concentration on puritanical fears and our preoccupation with ghetto-like introspection, we will view our task as making the gospel intelligible and powerful to an often indifferent world that seems to have exchanged morality for violence and oppressive behavior.

In speaking of hope, I now arrive at my text for this morning: What exactly is the *texture* of our hope? What is its *foundation*, its *scope*, and its *reality*? The words in Romans 5 are so rhetorically powerful that we tend to be swept away by them. But, we should ask, how realistic are they for our

daily lives? Have they simply become a part of our pulpit oratory which, once we leave the worship service, seems to be not only highly abstract but also very unrealistic? How realistic is it for us to entertain the apocalyptic hope in the final theophany that for Paul is so imminent but for us seems so distant? Indeed, while we still vividly remember our recent new year's resolutions and hopes, I don't think that the hope in God's coming glory was for any of us the vital part of our desires for the new year. In fact, the concept of hope is for most of us so freighted with the vagaries of luck and fate that we speak rather of expectations. After all, expectations are based on a more solid foundation than the "pie-in-the-sky" wishfulness associated with the notion of hope. Moreover, when Paul, after confessing his boast in the coming glory of God, begins to speak about boasting in afflictions, we shudder at this weird notion. It sounds very masochistic, and even when clever commentators attempt to convince us that indeed Paul is correct when he says in verses 3 and 4, "Affliction produces perseverance, and perseverance character, and character hope," we (or at least, I) find the rhetoric of such a proverbial saying unconvincing, if not disgusting. Indeed, I have experienced in my own life and have observed in the lives of others that affliction produces despair and hopelessness rather than character and hope.

Although a serious dealing with Paul's text must necessarily raise such questions as the ones I've mentioned, and although these questions must not be viewed simply as rhetorical devices but rather as abiding, existential questions, we should at least listen to the claim of this text and, in so listening, ponder its impact upon us. For the text raises important issues, such as what actually constitutes our integrity and identity as Christians? What is the foundation of our hope? What is its scope and horizon? Indeed, unless our hope has a horizon beyond our dreams of success and glory and the immediacy of their fulfillment, our lives will be suffocated by concerns of how to compete with others: whether we achieve As, Bs, or Cs, whether we are admitted to Ph.D. programs, or whether it is our popularity that gives our lives basic meaning—as if all these concerns *ultimately* decide our status and identity as Christians. For although, as we know all too well, such questions are not unimportant, they are apt to destroy our integrity and identity as Christians—that is, our sense of *being* somebody rather than *having* many things; of being determined not by our own glory but by the glory of God. And so the horizon of our hope is what gives us life; a sense of measuring the suffering of the injustices we must cope with in the present, and also our own unfulfilled expectations—of measuring those

against the love of God in Christ, whose amazing grace toward us has lifted us out of our prejudices, idolatries, and blindness and has given us the foundation of our hope. Indeed, we as Christians must realize that, as the book of Proverbs reminds us, "where there is no vision, the people perish."

But, you will ask, why should our horizon of hope be focused on the glory of God and her triumph? And why should my hope be contaminated by suffering? In this context, it is crucial to realize that Christian hope not only has a *cosmic* horizon, but that this cosmic horizon necessarily entails *suffering*. Unless we know that as Christians we are called to work in and suffer for the sake of God's world and for her promise of restoring her creation to its intended glory, our hope will lose its proper horizon and will be distorted into egocentric preoccupations accompanied by a conception of the church as a safe refuge that must do battle against an evil and indifferent world. Thus, the dynamic of the gospel signifies that Christian life in this world participates in both ecstasy and agony. In ecstasy because we, as Paul says, may celebrate God's peace and justification among us in the midst of all our disappointments and suffering; but our Christian life is necessarily accompanied by agony, because of the immense suffering of our brothers and sisters in God's world, which far outweighs our personal suffering. And so our hope becomes profound and realistic, because it is a hope that knows the burden of suffering for the sake of others in God's world. Paul even goes so far as to draw a parallel between boasting in hope and boasting in suffering. He does so because our suffering in and for God's world not only demonstrates our integrity as Christians but also stimulates the yearning for that day when all of God's children will together be embraced by his loving arms.

And so may this coming semester kindle our hope, make us endure suffering, make us cease our puritanical fears and homophobic bickering, and send us out into God's world so that *our* faith may, just as that of the church in Rome, be proclaimed in *God's whole world*. Amen.

# Stay Close

by BRIAN K. BLOUNT

*Assistant Professor of New Testament at Princeton Theological Seminary, Brian K. Blount preached this sermon at the senior class worship service in Miller Chapel on April 29, 1994.*

Text: Mark 9:14-29

I REMEMBER THE first time, when I was about five or six years old, that I walked unannounced through the closed door of my parents' bedroom and something other than sleeping was going on. My parents are very religious people, very devout. A child, even one so young, always wonders if a person's actions agree with that person's words. Do they do what they say, or do they only want *you* to do what they say, while they go about the business of doing whatever they please? My dad, you see, has preached to me all my life, from day one, about having faith, about staying close to God in moments of difficulty. He told me once, "Brian, my back's been up against the wall many times, but God always makes a way out at just the right moment." It is the code by which he has lived his life. His back has seen the wall many times, but God has never allowed him to be crushed against it.

I was thinking about how his spirit matched his words when I went home from my Ph.D. program in Atlanta for a visit. My parents have never had a lot of money, so I've always worried about their financial health. It has been the financial wall that has most often attempted to break their spiritual backs. And so there I sat riding in the car with my father the retired farmer, longshoreman, and meat packer of faith, and I asked him, "How are you doing?" He knew what I meant. It wasn't a question about physical health or spiritual metaphysics. Before he answered I could tell by the softness in his eyes that, yet again, the demands of life had backed him up against the wall. And when he didn't answer, I did. I said, "Seems like sometimes it never ends, doesn't it?" And then he said something I'd never expect a man of his faith to say. He said, "I think God doesn't intend for some people to have much of anything, much of any physical things." "But if you believe that," I said, "how do you keep on going? How do you keep believing? How do you keep thinking God will always make a way?"

And then he smiled and went on silently about his driving. And while he drove and smiled still, I thought, and I remembered. I remembered walking unannounced into that bedroom that first time. And there I saw them, the two of them, huddled, each against their respective side of the bed, on their knees, their hands folded before their faces the way they were even then

teaching me as a little child to fold mine before I slipped beneath the covers. Praying. Staying close. The reasons the walls that break many men never broke and never will break my father is that he stays close to a power that overwhelms the very powers that seek to overwhelm him. He was doing, and has always done, what he teaches me to do and live, to stay close to God even when circumstances and people try to convince you that you are far away.

It is the same message Jesus teaches his disciples in the story read from Mark 9:14-29. It is prayer that has the power to establish the close connection with God that enables one who believes to perform miraculous transformations of the life conditions—the *oppressive walls*—that haunt so many of God's people. Or as commentator Ched Myers writes in his interpretation of this passage, "What is unbelief but the despair, dictated by the dominant powers that nothing can *really* change, a despair that renders revolutionary vision and practice impotent. The disciples are instructed to battle this impotence, this temptation to resignation, through prayer."<sup>1</sup> They are instructed to stay close.

And for those who don't know, Mark explains how they are to stay close. They are to depend on the kind of prayer exemplified by that possessed boy's father. Faith and prayer come to the father's story in the last part of his cry to Jesus, "Help my unbelief!" He asks for Jesus' assistance, and this is, by Jesus' own reckoning, the very definition of prayer.<sup>2</sup> Now, on the surface, those words may not seem very faithful, but this is precisely the kind of prayer faith that is necessary for receiving the power of God. The father is prototypical of a person who has learned to pray. He depends not on his own righteous value before God, but realizes his problematic stance, acknowledges it, and yet still appeals to God's mercy. It's somewhat similar to Jesus himself, who in Gethsemane, wrestling with God's direction, realizes that he cannot control his destiny, but must submit himself and his mission to God's will. As one commentator writes, learning to pray means realizing the inadequacy of one's own faith in an apparently impossible situation, and yet continuing to depend entirely on God.<sup>3</sup>

Prayer, then, is energized by faith, and even, perhaps especially, the recognition of the inadequacy of one's faith. And because of this, Mark

<sup>1</sup> Ched Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), 255.

<sup>2</sup> Mk. 11:24.

<sup>3</sup> Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News According to Mark* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1970), 190.



knows that it is just as important that one understand from this story the meaning of faith. But before he tells us what faith is, Jesus shows us exactly what faith is *not*. Faith is *not* following. Not even following Jesus. Not even following God. Why? Because following is never enough.

I remember sitting in a mission-project board meeting at the church where I pastored and one of the elders, furious at other elders in the church because none of them was helping him in his efforts, demanded, "All of you said when we began this clothing project, 'Willie, go on and lead; we'll follow.' Well," he growled, "you are following, but you're following from so far back that I can't see you."

No, faith is not the same thing as following. The disciples in our story are a case in point. Sure, it's obvious that they're following Jesus. But we all know what happens when crunch time comes, when Jesus has to carry that cross through the streets of Jerusalem. They're following, but they're following from so far back that Mark can't even squeeze them into the narrative frame of his story. And it is just as obvious that when it comes time to help that possessed little boy, these followers lack faith. We're like the disciples in many ways. We act as if to be in, to belong to, to work for, to follow in membership in a church is to have faith.

I remember growing up hearing folk sing the songs like, "He leadeth me, By His own had He leadeth me, His faithful *follower* I would be, for by His hand He leadeth me"; or, one of my favorites, "I have decided to follow Jesus." Folk would be singing it as if Jesus were right there in the choir loft with them, "*I have decided to follow Jesus, No turning back, No turning back!*" Oh yes, I'll follow Jesus. Singing about you go your way, I'll follow Jesus. You go the world's way, I'll follow Jesus." Singing about following Jesus all the way into hell and back as long as they're singing it in that comfortable, climate-controlled, pew-padded, spiritually sophisticated service of worship. But come the next week, many of them weren't even willing to follow Jesus out to where misguided children were raising ruckus in front of the corner Tastee Freeze, much less follow him to the foot of the cross.

*Even in Mark's community*, the requirement for belonging was not faith but followership. But following is obviously not enough. Look at the Gospel presentation. Followers don't believe enough to move mountains. Followers don't believe enough to cast out demons. Followers don't believe enough to stay afloat in stormy seas. Followers don't even believe enough to stand up when they are challenged in the gardens of oppression and evil and say, "Yes, I am with Jesus. Yes, I am a follower of Jesus." No, followers yesterday and today, when times get tight and moments get tough, are too

often following from so far back that it's hard for God, even with God's omnisciently divine 20/20 vision, to see them. Following, let me echo Mark one more time, is not faith. It will not energize efficacious prayer.

So what is the faith that will so energize our prayers? It is the kind of faith that believes God can do the impossible. This is the kind of faith the disciples did not have; this is why they failed in their exorcism attempt. They don't have the faith to resort to prayer because they don't believe that God is powerful enough to answer some prayers. This is why they fail. This is what Jesus implies in 9:29 when he says that this kind of demonic force cannot be driven out by anything but prayer. Their faithlessness is ultimately due to their prayerlessness. They don't stay close. Evidently, they resorted to everything *but* prayer. The only reason can be that prayer is dependent on faith, and it was this kind of faith that these followers of the Jesus community did not have. A person packing this kind of faith prayer has the force to perform potent, powerful, practically unbelievable transformations of possessed and oppressed human life and human lives. The disciples were offered this possibility of power, but couldn't believe the possibilities and therefore lost the opportunity to transform that little boy's tragic life.

This happens because they don't believe it just as many modern followers don't believe it. For reality-trained and even seminary-trained critics, the story just doesn't add up. The plot just doesn't pan out. The script is just too fantastic to believe. They can't possibly act out this kind of transformation. God has written a plot that no right-thinking, right-following disciple could possibly believe. These right-thinking, right-following disciples can't possibly transform the life of that possessed—we might even say oppressed—little boy.

We followers of faith are very often just like them today. I sometimes think that if God were a twentieth-century author, the way God was a first-century author writing through someone like Jesus, we wouldn't believe the fantastic stories, the fantastic possibilities offered to us. If God were an author today, we wouldn't publish God. In fact, I think there are times when God does try to write the power of faith on human hearts today and we do indeed refuse to publish God. Why? Because God's plots are so twisted, so unlike life, so unbelievable. No one would believe the projection of power in the Gospels or in the Old Testament if it weren't written down as true. Some of us find it hard to believe it anyway. I know how it feels to send in a manuscript and have it turned back to you, rejected—particularly a fiction one, especially when the comments suggest that the story could never happen this way; nothing could happen like this in real life. God

would feel the same way with the kind of stuff God tries to get away with writing: death being transformed into life, people being set free from oppressive powers, people being healed of infirmities that limit their potential, people being saved by a man who has the willingness and the power to sacrifice himself for others. What kind of schlock is that? If God sent such a story to the denominational publishing houses of the twentieth century, the author had better include a self-addressed stamped envelope because we'd certainly be sending the manuscript back for unbelievability. We'd tell God, go back and write it over. Nobody will believe this. Nobody will try to live this. Nobody has the power to transform the demons of inner-city death into municipal life. Nobody has the power to create avenues of communication between ethnic and racial groups that more and more converse through hateful actions. Nobody has the power to climb down into the depths of institutional oppressive evils in our communities, cities, and country and resurrect the hope for equality and change. Nobody's going to follow all that.

People—too many Christian people and Christian leaders—have stopped trying because they know anybody who writes such a script doesn't know how to write. So our Christian leaders and our Christian folk turn to the kinds of things we think we *can* change. We talk about how to run our church, we talk about who ought to belong in our church, we talk about how to build new churches, we talk about how to convince more people to join our church, and we debate about what and how they ought to think and believe once they've joined, because, unbelievably, after all we've seen God do, this is all we believe *we* can do for God. So this is what we busy ourselves and our best minds with. Meanwhile, possessed little boys and girls are writhing in pain and hopelessness right before our genuflected feet. And when someone comes forward to demand, as Jesus does when he comes down from that mountain, that we use what we've learned to change what appears to be unchangeable outside the church, it appears to me that God finds too many followers hovering around pulpits and communion tables and not enough believers out in the muck and mud of human reality transforming the lives of those who stand with their backs against the wall. Which will you be? Are you going to be a follower? Follow the line of graduation out the door of seminary and into the seclusion of righteous spirituality. Or are you going to stay close to God in the power of Mark's kind of prayer. You do that and I believe you will be compelled to stand against the walls, and furthermore, you'll have the power to transform these walls, to break them down, and indeed, to transform yourselves.

But transform into what? Let me share something with you. I love to hear great singing, and I've heard some lately. Particularly, I've heard some powerful spirituals and been moved greatly by the music. But I always wonder when I hear spirituals sung in the wrong context. And these days that sometimes means the *church context*. And I don't mean when they're sung in white churches by white choirs as some might suppose. I mean even when and perhaps especially when they're sung in middle-class African-American churches. Long ago author Zora Neal Hurston wrote that whenever the spiritual is sung in a context other than that of the oppression out of which it arose, when the song is sung for merely artistic reasons, it's not really a spiritual that's being sung. And why? Because, as I argue in my dissertation, the spiritual came to life and gave life in the context of hopeless struggle, like that of a father with a child whose possession will not go away. Once you take the song out of that context it loses a great deal of its meaning and power. Indeed, we often change them, pacify them, domesticate them the way we do a dog we teach to lie down, go fetch, and play dead. So I'm annoyed these days when I hear a spiritual like "Jacob's Ladder" sung by modern Christians who think they know better the imagery of thinking, praying, and singing properly in Christ, and therefore change the imagery of the slave lyrics in a way that they think makes better Christian sense and leaves a better, peaceable impression upon the world. So, the song sung in slavery, "We am climbing Jacob's Ladder, every rung goes higher, higher," is now too often ending, "*followers of the cross.*" I heard it sung just this way not too long ago, in this very chapel. "*Followers of the cross.*" The slaves, you see, ended it with the *inappropriate* military imagery, "*soldiers of the cross.*"

I'm disturbed because even those illiterate slaves had a word for follower. They knew what followers were. They knew what following meant. If they had *meant* followers they would have *said* followers. They *didn't say it* because they weren't singing about followers or following. They didn't need followers. They were praying for soldiers. Followers do just that, they follow, sometimes close, sometimes at a distance, depending on what the conditions of the following happen to be. Soldiers not only follow in ranks, they lead sometimes; sometimes they get wounded, sometimes they die, but they don't fall back unless their leader does. The slaves believed that if they were going to endure with hope in a hopeless situation, if they were going to call upon God's power to threaten, challenge, and defeat oppressive power, they were going to have to help in that cause as *soldiers* of the cross.

I believe that today, given the massive problems that will face you as you



leave this place in the cause of the Lord, given the insurmountable odds that loom before you, we don't need followers who will debate, counsel, and discuss while children writhe and twist before our eyes. We need soldiers who gather phalanxes of militant troops willing to operate *by any non-violent, gospel-directed means necessary* to change the conditions of our world. It's not so much *what* we do, as *that* we do something, and that we do it with the attitude that we must act urgently. The little possessed boy in our scripture had all the followers huddling around him that he could handle. The people and communities that are possessed in so many ways in our world today also have all the followers huddling in worship that they can handle. What they need more of are soldiers who stay close to the program of and the power behind the cross.

Watch the father. Despite his unbelief, he stays close to Jesus in a way that even Jesus' disciples do not. Because of his unbelief he realizes that he needs Jesus' help, and he appeals for it, believing that Jesus can make a difference. And even after Jesus exorcises the boy, when it appears for a moment that the successful spiritual surgery has killed the patient, when the others think the child is dead, the father still apparently has not given up, there is no sense from him that Jesus has failed. This has major implications for the disciples who are struggling with the possibility of resurrection at this point. They may believe *it's possible* in some theoretical sense, but can it happen for Jesus? They don't seem to understand that it can. But this event assures them as it assures the father that it's not a question of God's power, it's a question of whether one has enough faith in that power. This is the meaning of the symbolic exorcism, to teach what the resurrection is all about. Not power. The power is a given. But faith. Which, unfortunately, is not.

If, then, this scripture story does indeed have a message, a calling even, for you who are about to leave this place, it is the calling to stay close to the power that comes from prayer by staying close to faith, the father's kind of faith. The kind of faith that believes that God can give you the power you need to face the social, political, and spiritual challenges you will certainly face.

But it is also the calling to stay close to the action. Prayer power not only *enables*, it *involves* the person who stays close to God through it. The kind of prayer Jesus talks about is as active as it is contemplative. It changes things. This is why you must stay close: to maintain the power to change things. And there is so very much that needs to be changed. Our church, and I don't mean just the Presbyterian church, is a little like my great grandmother was at ninety-six. A little old. A little tired. The first time I ever saw a



bottle of Geritol, it was in my great grandmother's house. She was in her eighties at that point, and I remember asking her, "Jen, what do those things do for you?" And she smiled and said, "Baby, I've got an old body, but those Geritol pills make me feel like I've got new blood moving inside it." You know, don't you, that God intends you to be the Geritol that sweeps from this orifice of higher theological education into the bloodstream of the church? And let me tell you how much we need you.

We have a struggling church today, not only in Presbyterianism, but in every denomination. People stopped believing in us somewhere down the line, and I think it's because we stopped believing in ourselves. Like those disciples we became timid, unsure of ourselves, afraid to push ourselves like warriors into a battle of God's people and God's causes, because we're not soldiers any more; we've become strategic planners and tip-toeing followers. We don't engage, we talk about how others should engage. We develop committees and commissions and we plan, like those disciples, and all the while the possessed boys are groveling on the ground, the fathers are pleading, and Jesus comes down from the mountain and says, "My God, what is going on here, why are you who have the power to help talking and debating over here? Why aren't you out there using what I've already shown you?"

I'm not sure that there doesn't need to be a generational shift in the church in which you, a new generation, can move into the church with vision and hope. We need Jesus' eschatological fire of impatience burning in your bellies to call us out of our sleepy spiritual and internal, in-house, overindulgent ecclesiastical self-concern, to be the Geritol in our lackluster blood that pumps up the church to the point of cardiac arrest. That's where we should be and that's what I'm hoping you can begin to do for the church: instill it with a feverish capacity to engage the problems, to fight the battles, unashamed, unafraid, unwilling to stop at planning, and willing to push your churches, presbyteries, conferences into a real belief that the kingdom is coming imminently. And we need this, not tomorrow, not when we get ourselves straight, not when the signs are feasible, not when all the people we don't want are out and all the ones we do want are in, not when we've had a chance to debate and strategize it through and through, but now. We need urgently to move towards the children possessed in our own world and the fathers and mothers praying on their behalf to show and say, "Jesus sent me; I may not be able to do all he could do, but by God, I'll come out of my sanctuary and do what I can do in his name."

This is the image that Jesus and, to some extent, the father present in the

story. But not the disciples. In this school we've taught you about eschatology. For most of us that's a theological concept we've demythologized, demystified, and nullified for all practical purposes. It lives in the head but not in the heart, not where it makes you move and push as if there is no tomorrow, as if we've got to make our push in the church, for the church, and even over the church if it won't get out of our mission way so that we can prepare our people, God's people, for the reality that is God's kingdom. That's why I think Jesus was so frustrated; "How long am I to be with this generation that keeps on stumbling and bumbling about, doing things the way they've always been done, afraid to push with a fire in their spiritual bellies to change themselves and their world, acting like they've got all the time to argue and debate until I come down off the mountain?"

"Stop waiting for me to come off the mountain, followers. Stop waiting for me to drop out of heaven, followers. I've told you what you must do, I've taught you how to do it, now stop debating about it and just do it."

But the disciples are neither close enough to Jesus' power nor close enough to the action to engage. Notice how they are having this little meeting about what they are supposed to be doing, instead of doing it. They are, right here in this story, the first committee Christians. There is a boy writhing in pain right before them and instead of using their gifts they're off to the side having a meeting, trying to decide what to do, when Jesus has already taught them what to do. What they need to do is get back over there with the boy and start doing it.

I tell you, when I think about discipleship, about what it means to stay close to God's powerful presence through prayer and what that means for how we as soldiers engage the causes of God's struggling people, I think about playing intramural basketball here at Princeton Theological Seminary. Now anybody on my team will tell you that I'm not that great a basketball player, and I know one of the reasons why. I'm too timid. Arlington Medley used to tell me all summer how much the team needed my twenty points a game if it was going to be successful. I think I ended up supplying maybe .5 points a game. So Arlington Medley would tell me after every game, "You need to shoot more."

They say good shooters have neither conscience nor memory. They don't care when they miss a shot, and they don't remember whether their missed shot hurt the team effort any one time down the floor. They shoot again because it's what they do. But I'm timid because I have too much conscience, and my memory has always been one of my stronger suits. I remember how embarrassed I can be when I shoot an air ball. I don't want

people laughing at me, thinking I'm a poor player, which I am, but I don't want people thinking it. So I don't push myself to realize what capabilities I do have. I watch others push themselves. And I lean on their abilities because I'm scared that I don't have what it takes; I'm scared I'll mess up, that I'll push to the point of no return and find out I don't have a return ticket home to safety. So I watch others score and struggle, while I run around on the edges of the action and counsel in my mind, think about whether I can do that, debate as to whether next time down I'm going to try that too, and all the while I'm thinking and debating, while the game is going on now. My teammates need me; they don't need me to do more than I can do, they just need me to do what I can do. And I can't do that if I'm scared into committee rather than motivated into the fight. I think this was why Jesus was so annoyed with his nine boys down in the valley. "There's a game going on guys," he was saying; "look at God's people hustling up and down the courts of misery, loss, oppression, disease, loneliness, and fear. I gave you the jump shot that can sink the power of sin. I gave you the spin move to wipe away the evil that hangs onto their spirits. I gave you the drive to push past those who would oppress my people as you cleared them out of the way to lead my people to the goal of hope. I gave you the ability to leap above the doubts and the fears so you could take all the chains that bind the hopes and aspirations of my people and dunk them into oblivion. So why, for God's sake, you are running up and down the court of this boy's suffering on the edge, away from the action, scared to engage. Stop worrying about how you might feel embarrassed if you can't do everything I can do. They don't need you to do everything I can do; they need you to do what you can do. Come over here, get out of the huddle of your thoughts, get out of the huddle of your worship services, action plans, and strategy sessions, and take the ball. For God's sake, get in the game. Stay close to me, and I'll go with you into the game." It's the message, the powerful connection that transforms followers into soldiers.

But before I close I must come clean myself. You know, when I heard about this invitation, my first inclination was to turn it down. Not because I'm not honored that you would ask me to preach at such an important occasion; I am. But because I was a little afraid. Not of preaching. But of preaching in this academic context. I never preached in this chapel while I was a student and when I returned I honestly intended not to preach here as a professor. When I was a student it was because it always felt more like an academic exercise than a spiritual one—I felt even then I was being graded. Now it's because I remember how my sermons in my community in Virgin-

ia sometimes got me into trouble, and junior professors already have all the trouble they can handle just being junior professors. I worry about that kind of stuff all the time it seems now. About how people perceive me. About whether I'm doing too much. Saying too much. About how far I have the resources to push myself beyond the confines of this sheltered seminary existence to work where I ought to be working in the world around it. Used to be that I was like you, sitting here, anticipating my graduation, on my way, fearless to say anything, do anything I thought was necessary to bring about the kind of change I knew God wanted me to create. No matter what the consequences. But graduate school made me cautious because I needed to calm waves, not make them. Sometimes I'm cautious, scared still. Believe me, there will come a time when you start to worry in the same way—worry about offending parishioners, offending powerful people on the session, in the presbytery, on the deacon board, in the bishop's office, in the mayor's office, on the school board, in the chamber of commerce, in the PTA—and you start to think, "You know, I've got a family, I want to have friends, I want people to like me, I want to keep my job or secure it for a long time." So you can start to think, "Maybe I ought to do Christianity, do faith the way Brian Blount plays basketball, without risk, without doing anything that might push me to the point of no return." I'm here tonight, though, because I want to tell you and remind myself that if that's what you've graduated to do, then maybe your presbytery *can* use you, maybe your bishop *can* use you, maybe your church *can* use you, but I'm not so sure God can use you. Appears to me, by then you're pretty much all used up. God needs soldiers, not used-up followers. God needs players who can give God twenty every night. That's what finally came to me as I meditated on the decision to worship with you this evening. I thought about my father struggling and believing. I thought about those slaves singing and believing. In cotton fields, in corn fields, in tobacco fields, in fields of misery and hopelessness, and yet they sang the Lord's song in a foreign land. They stayed close to God, and that gave them faith, and the faith gave them power. That's why they sang, "We am climbin' Jacob's ladder. We am climbin' Jacob's ladder." God needs you on Jacob's ladder. Soldiers, yes, I said, *soldiers* of the cross.



# At Table

by BARBARA A. CHAAPEL

*An ordained Presbyterian minister and a graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary (M. Div.), Barbara A. Chaapel serves the Seminary as Director of Communications/Publications. She preached this Maundy Thursday sermon in Miller Chapel on March 31, 1994.*

TEXT: MARK 14:12-25

JESUS HAS already been at two tables this last week of his life before he gathers with his friends around the table in the upper room. He has entered the temple in Jerusalem and turned over the tables of the money-changers, breaking the cages of the doves as the tables of the dove sellers crash to the floor. This action was not just about throwing commerce out of a holy place. Jesus would not have been surprised to find money-changers in the temple; it was the center of economic life in Jerusalem.

In his action, rather, Jesus challenged the heart of the religious establishment itself, and set the authority of his message—the radical love of God for all people, especially the least and the lost—against the authority of the ruling class, the dominant power, represented by the scribes and Pharisees. It is this table-turning act, more than any other, that puts in motion the decision to kill Jesus and the conspiracy to accomplish it.

Then Jesus retreated to Bethany and sat at another table—a table in the house of Simon the leper. There, in the surprising action of a woman breaking a beautiful alabaster jar and pouring its expensive oil on his head, we see that the disciples still do not understand Jesus or his mission. The seeds of betrayal from within the community are sown. The disciples are angered that money has been wasted; yet one of them will soon accept a lucrative pact to hand him over to the authorities.

Now we come to the table in a Jerusalem attic: Jesus' Last Supper with his community. When I try to visualize the Last Supper, I think of two paintings: one by Salvador Dali and the other by Rembrandt. Dali's Last Supper shows a transparent, resurrected Christ with the disciples sitting around a table that seems to melt into a lakeside; boats are visible through Jesus' body. Rembrandt's Last Supper is painted in darker shades, with the twelve crowded around a long table, and the wonderful light that is Rembrandt's genius illuminating the face of Jesus.

But Mark's Last Supper is not the calm, lofty, devotional moment in the upper room that I associate with both of these paintings. Mark's Last Supper is more like a painting I have not seen but read about in Ched Myers' commentary on Mark, *Binding the Strong Man*. Painted by a Guatemalan artist in exile in Australia, it depicts the Last Supper against the



political landscape of Latin America. Myers describes Jesus in the center of a smoke-filled room surrounded by a vivid tableau of characters. The twelve disciples are there. Crowded around them are military generals, high-class prostitutes, guerrillas, peasants with their starving children, a priest saying Mass, and mutilated bodies under the table.

There is no religious aura or hint of resurrection in Mark's recounting. The room seems full of danger and secrecy on the one hand, and betrayal on the other. Jesus and his friends have found the room by prearranged secrecy—the sign is a man carrying a jar of water. They gather there with the conspiracy and plotting of the religious authorities closing in on them from the outside. And from the inside, as Judas and Jesus dip their bread in the same bowl, the stark reality of betrayal by one's closest friends pierces and violates the table fellowship, foreshadowing not only Judas' betrayal, but Peter's denial and the sleeping and running away in the garden.

And at *this* table, in the company of danger, secrecy, conspiracy, and betrayal, there is another breaking—not of a dove cage or an alabaster jar, but of the bread of Passover. In a final, extraordinary action with his most intimate community, Jesus takes the symbols of the Passover meal—unleavened bread and wine—and gives them astounding new meaning.

Instead of the traditional, expected Passover haggadah in which the elements of the meal—bread, wine, bitter herbs, lamb—are explained in relation to the exodus event and God's covenant of law, Jesus reinterprets the symbols in terms of *himself* and his vocation. In a bold (dare I say the word?) reimagining of symbols that must have been shocking to the disciples, he tells them that his own *body*, prepared for death, broken, is the bread of the Passover, and that his own blood must be spilled to ratify a new covenant. Jesus himself becomes the paschal lamb, the vicarious sacrifice.

It is to this upper room that we are invited, to this table, whose host is not just the resurrected Christ, but also the about-to-be-crucified Jesus. We must come knowing that we come to a dangerous place; that what we do here is powerful and will confront and challenge the dominant authorities in the culture and even the church. We must come knowing that we have all betrayed him; we have all sold our souls to other masters, or been silent when he would have had us speak, or denied that we knew him. And we must come admitting that we do not fully understand the meaning of the action he takes here—that radical breaking of bread and tradition and body.

But we come because we are invited to a place where, in spite of danger and betrayal and misunderstanding, we are loved as deeply as we will ever be loved. We come to take our place in the tableau, to sit at table with him and each other. And Jesus says to us: "This is my body, broken for you."

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## BOOK REVIEWS

Capps, Donald. *The Depleted Self: Sin in a Narcissistic Age*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993. Pp. xiv + 176. \$12.95.

Analyses of shame, narcissism, and individualism have each figured prominently in Donald Capps' contributions to pastoral theology and the psychology of religion. In *The Depleted Self* Capps brings each concept to bear on his provocative challenge to theologians to revise the doctrine of sin in a way that meaningfully addresses the contemporary "problematics of the self."

There are two arguments in *The Depleted Self*. The first argument is that contemporary people, including Christian laity and clergy, suffer from narcissism (albeit in varying forms and to varying degrees) and that shame is the pivotal experience of the narcissistic self. Traditional theology has emphasized the relationship between sin and guilt, leaving Christians with a "perfectly good theory" for a malady most of its constituents do not have. A relevant theology of sin will center on the true problematics of the self (the contemporary self is not a guilty self but a shameful self—divided, defensive, and depleted) and address the shame that pervades human lives rather than merely condemn people for their narcissism. The first four chapters of *The Depleted Self* describe and analyze this contemporary *experience* of sin.

The second argument is that individualism (in particular, the "expressive individualism" critiqued by Bellah et al. in *Habits of the Heart*) has been made the scapegoat for narcissism. Capps takes on the common view that individualism is the root cause of narcissism (for which the cure is genuine community) and argues the reverse: narcissism is the result of the diminishing influence of individualism in American institutional life. The real culprit in the culture of narcissism is modern bureaucracy. "An individual becomes depleted when the autonomy of the individual comes up against, and is defeated by, the autonomy of the institution." This autonomous authority of the institution is a travesty of the Emersonian understanding of autonomy, which Capps champions.

Relying heavily on Richard Sennett's critique of autonomous authorities in bureaucratic organizations, Capps makes the case that persons in the grip of the autonomous authority wielded by institutions become ashamed of their desires to be recognized and affirmed. Whether as more powerful managers (examples of the manipulative form of narcissism) or less powerful employees (examples of the craving form of narcissism), people are bound together in the roles required by modern institutions and shaped by assumptions about the value of autonomous authority. Thus the fifth and sixth chapters of *The Depleted Self* locate the psychosocial *conditions* for sin not only in early childhood development but also in modern bureaucracy.

The arguments culminate in a final chapter in which, after exploring the modern experience of sin and its conditioning factors, Capps essentially asks: What is the gospel for the narcissistic self? Capps uses the Book of Jonah to illustrate both the dilemma of the narcissist and the dynamics of the narcissist's relationship to autonomous authority. Jonah (a narcissist who is both driven and hamstrung by shame) is toyed with by a condescending, autonomous God who uses shame to manipulate Jonah into compliance. This kind of relationship with God is depicted as a bad dream suffered by Jonah. Jonah's hope, like ours, is to awaken from that bad dream to another vision of relationship with divine and human authority—a relationship characterized by loving recognition ("positive mirroring") and encouragement to trust and care for ourselves.

The good news for Capps is that the God revealed by Jesus is the God whose face indeed shines upon us in blessing, who helps us have faith in ourselves, authorizes our "mutual beholdings," and believes in us. Capps uses gospel texts to illustrate how Jesus replaced the bond of shame with the bond of love, how Jesus encouraged the fragile self's struggle to survive and flourish. Such is the true call of religious communities in any age, especially in the age of the depleted self.

Capps accomplishes two major purposes for writing the book: he distinguishes narcissism from individualism (the terms are often used interchangeably in discourse about contemporary social and psychological problems) and makes the clinical writings on narcissism more accessible to theologians. He presents the work of self psychologists (Kohut, Bursten, Morrison) in a way that defines narcissism more precisely and usefully, describes its nuances and complexities, includes social as well as intrapsychic dimensions of its sources, helps Christians examine how it is *our* dilemma, and makes it difficult for us to speak moralistically or simplistically about a complex phenomenon.

I have come to expect fascinating connection making among human dilemmas, biblical texts, and recent psychological theory from Capps, and I was not disappointed by *The Depleted Self*. For example, whether one agrees with his analysis of Jonah's plight or not, his thesis about the story is almost guaranteed to raise interest in the text and its meanings. Since he argues a different interpretation of Jonah in *Reframing: A New Method in Pastoral Care* (1990), Capps demonstrates a cherished Emersonian principle: "a foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of small, little minds" who are so enslaved to their theories that they cannot respond to creative new ideas.

What about his arguments? Do they convince? There is growing theological interest and agreement (which I share) concerning Capps' thesis about the centrality of shame in contemporary experience. He is no longer a lone voice arguing this thesis, and the book would have been strengthened

by dialogue with the work of other pastoral theologians (for example, the work of Nancy Ramsey and other feminists about shame dynamics in the experience of abuse, and John Patton's thesis about shame and the dynamics of forgiveness).

While Capps' connections between shame and the contemporary human condition are clear and convincing, he is less clear about the implications of these connections for the healing process. Perhaps this is because in Capps' quick moves between intrapsychic and social analysis and in his eagerness to prove the point that narcissism affects everyone, it becomes difficult for the reader to distinguish between the kind of help people need when they have suffered serious narcissistic injury and the kind of help people need to cope with life in contemporary institutions. The problem many therapists have found with self psychology is the length of time involved in treatment. Pastors reading the book will want to hear more about how "positive mirroring" takes place in congregations (Capps says that it often does take place, but doesn't give examples) and what implications this response to the depleted self has for general congregational ministry and the ministry of pastoral counseling.

As for the second argument, that narcissism is the result of the diminishing influence of individualism in American institutional life, which leaves persons depleted and defeated by modern institutions, my response includes both a yes and a no. Scarcely a day goes by that I do not hear (and experience) how depleting life in religious institutions is for mainline Protestants; how absorbing and draining the preoccupation with institutional survival; how fearful the consequences of thinking differently, despite the emphasis on celebrating diversity. Capps alludes to but does not develop the idea that market values and market forces are powerful contributors to these dynamics of depletion. In some contexts the struggle to survive includes much more than the struggle for self-expression. It also involves the struggle to live in the midst of violence and to earn daily bread.

In my experience, whatever the sources of depletion may be, it is clear that individuals working alone are no match for institutional power. The solidarity of the suffering is required, not only for witness but for nourishment and laughter on the journey. In his next book, I hope Capps will continue the work he has begun and go on to speak theologically and pastorally about the kinds of pastoral relationships and ecclesial communities that foster both creative self-expression *and* resistance to that which depletes human life. I will look forward to reading it.

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Migliore, Daniel L., ed. *The Lord's Prayer: Perspectives for Reclaiming Christian Prayer*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1993. Pp. 151. \$12.99.

Many have already found these essays on the Lord's Prayer interesting, informative, and useful, for they were originally presented at the 1991 Frederick Neumann Symposium and published in a *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* supplement. Their appearance in book form is a response to many requests to make the material more widely available.

In the initial essay, addressing some ambiguities of prayer in contemporary culture, Jan Lochman emphasizes that prayer gives the self a secure identity in God and opens one to the needs of others. Samuel Balentine discusses prayer in both the psalms and narratives of the Hebrew Bible. The scriptural dialogue with God consists basically of praise and lament, both accompanied by petition. Praise affirms the transcendent dimension of life, and lament keeps God immanent in life. The Lord's Prayer uses the pattern of praise followed by petition.

In his discussion of early Jewish prayer (250 B.C.E. to 200 C.E.), James Charlesworth shows that Jesus came from a people who knew how to pray. Their prayers exhibit dependence on God, a thirst for God's gracious forgiveness, and a hunger to converse with God. Such prayers in various public contexts brought solidarity and calendar harmony to the early Jews. Donald Juel's "The Lord's Prayer in Matthew and Luke" focuses on the opening words, "Our Father." Although many today feel alienated from God as Father, Juel argues that we are invited to experience God as Father through the gospel stories of the God whose faithfulness was demonstrated in raising Jesus from the dead. These gospel stories also have the power to create community by bestowing forgiveness on the wayward prodigals and the resentful responsible ones.

In "The Lord's Prayer in Patristic Literature," Karlfried Froehlich notes that use of the Lord's Prayer in baptism encouraged a multitude of patristic catechetical works stressing the prayer's doctrinal and ethical content. One perennially interesting question considered by the church fathers was the purpose of petitionary prayer. Since they all believed that God knows the future, they answered that God wants us to express our needs in order to benefit us, not God. Elsie Anne McKee explains that Calvin regarded prayer as the chief exercise of piety and the Lord's Prayer as the perfect pattern for right praying, not so much in its precise words as in its concerns. Thus the first three petitions focus on giving glory to God and the last three concern basic human needs.

Patricia Wilson-Kastner identifies nine issues that the Lord's Prayer raises for contemporary life, including questions about anthropomorphism and patriarchy in addressing God as Father. Her insights and suggestions as

an Episcopal parish priest are theologically solid, eminently sensible, and in touch with parish life. In the final essay Douglas John Hall delineates three ways in which the Lord's Prayer links theology and ethics. First, whereas "religion" seeks God in order to escape the world, to seek and find the God addressed in the Lord's Prayer is to be turned back *with* God to the world. Second, the Lord's Prayer moves smoothly from the first three petitions, which are public and cosmic, to the last three, which are personal. Third, the Lord's Prayer is realistic about the radical need for transformation in the world yet expresses vital hope in God's grace. The book ends with a substantial bibliography of works on the Lord's Prayer compiled by Steven R. Bechtler.

I recommend *The Lord's Prayer: Perspectives for Reclaiming Christian Prayer* for both personal and group study. All its essays are of high quality and clear. In addition, I recommend combining reflection on one of the book's eight chapters with time for quiet meditation on a portion of the Lord's Prayer. The Lord's Prayer is a guide for the actual practice of prayer, and it cannot function as such when we rush through it in public worship and merely "talk about" it in a discussion. The depths of this prayer can inform and shape our lives more fully when we also take time to meditate on it. The essays in this volume increase our understanding of the Lord's Prayer and how it has functioned in the church; meditation on the Prayer itself further enables these insights to nourish our personal and communal life.

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Levine, Baruch A. *Numbers 1-20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. New York: Doubleday, 1993. Pp. xvi + 528. \$40.00.

This newest volume of the Anchor Bible commentary exemplifies the best kind of work in the style of the series. A lengthy introduction (over one hundred pages) orients the reader to major issues in the Book of Numbers, ranging from ancient manuscripts to source criticism to ethnography and literary matters. The first twenty chapters of Numbers are treated in fourteen sections. The sections include a new translation and notes on individual words and phrases that explain the translation and the verses in relation to other portions of the Hebrew Bible or ancient Near Eastern materials. Additionally, many sections include treatments of one or more pertinent topics under the heading "Comment." In these topical treatments Levine takes up broader themes such as "Introducing the Levites," "Moses and Prophetic Leadership," and "How Temples Kept Records."

Levine, who teaches Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Studies at New York University, brings to this commentary decades of research in materials

relating to ritual, priesthood, and the history of worship in Israel and the ancient Near East. His extensive incorporation of the rabbinic tradition and of ongoing Jewish practice also contributes to the richness of this volume. Levine's linguistic skills are deftly displayed both in the freshness of the translation and in the suggestions of semitic parallels to clarify difficult passages. Translation phrases such as "within earshot of YHWH" (11:1, 18) or "[the Israelites] surged ahead, attempting to climb to the summit of the mountain range" (14:44) heighten the drama and are explained in the notes.

Levine argues on various grounds that much of the priestly material of Numbers is of later provenance than the P material in Exodus and Leviticus. The priestly material in Numbers exhibits both redaction of older materials and composition of new sections by the postexilic priesthood of Jerusalem. Indeed, Levine believes some legal sections of Numbers were composed as late as the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E. At the same time, he argues that some of the poetry and JE material incorporated into Numbers has more ancient roots. Although these views may sound familiar to those schooled in the classic version of source-critical theory, they have come under question in recent years both by some who treat JE as late and by some who view P as preexilic. Although the debate continues and consensus is unlikely, Levine's views still represent a majority perspective.

Levine also argues for the continuing value of distinguishing JE from P throughout the commentary, rather than focusing on the received form of the text as does Jacob Milgrom in his important 1990 Numbers commentary in the Jewish Publication Society series. Through this approach Levine seeks to identify the historiographical interests peculiar to JE and P. He suggests, for instance, that JE's presentation of Israel's wilderness encounters with certain ethnographic groups (Amalakites, Edomites, Moabites, etc.) seeks to sanction or justify monarchical Israel's policies toward those groups. P for its part is interested in postexilic provisions for the priesthood, for Levites, and for laws of purity. Levine believes that the priestly legislation represents actual practice, not merely an ideal, again in contrast to some recent scholarly opinion.

The book of Numbers rarely appears in a Christian lectionary, and lay people have been known to say that reading Numbers through once should suffice for a Christian lifetime. For the pastor or layperson who wishes to buck this tide, Levine's translation, notes, and comments (more than his introduction) will help to bring the text and its ancient world to life. For the biblical scholar specializing in the history of worship, ritual, or pentateuchal studies, this volume provides an important additional resource in which Levine synthesizes the results of more than two dozen earlier publications.

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Holladay, William L. *The Psalms through Three Thousand Years: Prayerbook of a Cloud of Witnesses*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993. Pp. xi + 395. \$36.00.

At the 1993 Annual Meeting of the Psalms Group of the Society of Biblical Literature, biblical scholars James Limburg, Patrick D. Miller, and Beth Tanner all asserted that the interpretation of the Psalms is not complete apart from a consideration of their actual use in Judaism and Christianity. It is precisely this area of concern that Holladay addresses in this volume. Holladay, Professor of Old Testament at Andover Newton Theological School, has compiled an impressive wealth of information which he recounts in a lively and compelling style. As the reader accompanies the journey of the Psalms through three thousand years, she or he is introduced to characters as varied in time, place, and background as King David, Jeremiah, Job, Jesus, Athanasius, Augustine, Ibn Ezra, Rashi, Luther, Calvin, Bach, Handel, Isaac Watts, Charles Wesley, Hermann Gunkel, Dorothy Day, Thomas Merton, Igor Stravinsky, C. S. Lewis, Ann Tyler, Eldridge Cleaver, Rosemary Ruether, and Garrison Keillor—to name only a few! All these voices and many more assist Holladay to achieve admirably his stated purpose “to tell the whole story of the Psalms . . . in a way accessible to the nonspecialist.”

Holladay's treatment of the Psalms is framed neatly by an opening chapter and an epilogue that both deal with Psalm 23. The former illustrates the ongoing ability of the Psalms to communicate powerfully thousands of years after their composition, and the latter relates the fascinating development of Psalm 23 into “an American Secular Icon.” In between, the book is divided into three parts. Part one, “The Psalms Take Shape—A Reconstruction,” deals with the origin and use of the Psalms from the time of David (about 1000 B.C.E.) to the postexilic period. It concludes with a chapter on the compilation of the Hebrew Psalter and its translation into other languages. Part two, “The Psalter Through History,” includes chapters on the use of the Psalms in the Dead Sea Scrolls, in the New Testament, in Jewish sources, in patristic and medieval commentaries and liturgies, in the Reformation era, in Roman Catholicism from Trent to Vatican II, in the nineteenth century, and in Protestant and Roman Catholic churches today. Part three, “Current Theological issues,” includes chapters on the use of the lament/complaint Psalms in worship and pastoral care (for instance with victims of domestic violence), on the Psalms of vengeance and how Christians should interpret and use them, on linguistic and historical issues involved in translating the Psalms, on the ability of the Psalms to communicate cross-culturally (which includes a section, “How Do the Psalms Function for Women?”), and on Christian appropriation and use of the Psalms.

There are problematic aspects of Holladay's argument—notably the “Re-



construction" of part one, which depends on the hazardous and extremely speculative enterprise of dating Psalms and attempting to locate them sociologically and geographically. Then too, some may disagree with the suggestions that Holladay offers for a christological reading of the Psalms. Nothing should detract, however, from the fact that Holladay has brought together in one volume a treatment of the use of the Psalms over the entire life of their existence in Israel and Judah, Judaism, Roman Catholicism, and the Orthodox and Protestant traditions. Obviously, as Holladay himself recognizes, the treatment is selective; and he commends Rowland E. Prothero's *The Psalms in Human Life* as a supplement to his volume. Nevertheless, Holladay has compiled a rich array of sources that will be informative, edifying, and useful to anyone who reads, studies, prays, preaches, teaches, or sings the Psalms.

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Charlesworth, James H., ed. *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992. Pp. xxix + 597. \$39.95.

The papers collected in this book are the fruit of the first Princeton Symposium on Judaism and Christian Origins, held in 1987 at Princeton Theological Seminary. The book contains contributions in the field of Jewish pre-Christian and New Testament messianology. The book is a highly valuable step in elucidating various problems. As far as I can see, the book is solid and never reckless. It can be recommended to those in various forms of ministry, since many of the papers contain fresh insights for Christian faith and life today. Here one can clearly see the positive results afforded by a collaboration between Christian and Jewish scholars, even if their research cannot directly promote a faith or an ideology or completely eliminate tentative assumptions.

Some studies in the volume have helped me in my personal research—for example, J. G. Heintz's essay about the iconographic approach to royal traits of messianic figures. Heintz demonstrates the Mesopotamian roots of Jewish and early Christian messianology. Similarly, Moses' dream in the Jewish Greek tragedy of Ezechias stems ultimately from ancient oriental descriptions of the enthronement of a king. I have also learned very much from Peder Borgen's excellent study of the messianic idea in Philo, and I greatly appreciate Adela Yarbro Collins' article on the "Son of Man" tradition and the Book of Revelation. Richard A. Horsley's treatment of "messianic" figures and movements in first-century Palestine is indispensable for all who study this period. The same goes also for Hugh Anderson's analysis of the Jewish antecedents of the christology of Hebrews. There is no question about the high value of the contributions made by Alan F. Segal,



Shemaryahu Talmon, and Nils A. Dahl. Matthew Black's study of the messianism of the Parables of Enoch will surely be read by all who want to be well informed about this crucial theme. James H. Charlesworth's introduction, "From Messianology to Christology," paves the way to a fresh approach to this problem for all of us.

My difficulty with the present volume can be summarized in two points: 1) the incompleteness of the whole picture due to the strange dogma that excludes all material dated after the coming of Jesus; and 2) the idea that in the research of the humanities (e.g., the study of history) there exists a kind of linear progress so that a temporary consensus reached on a special problem mostly effaces previous results and leads almost automatically to a future higher consensus (e.g., pp. 11, 513). This is not only extremely questionable but even dangerous. The old wine is sometimes better. I believe that there was a pre-Danielic "Son of Man" and that this tradition did not later disappear. (I hope my Hebrew study of this subject will appear also in English.) As to the messianic self-awareness of Jesus, one is again more optimistic than in the period of past consensus. Martin Hengel, who has also written an important study in the present volume, has recently published a pivotal study on this subject ("Jesus, der Messias Israels," in *Messias und Christos*, ed. M. Hengel [Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1992], 155-176).

David Flusser  
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Becker, Jürgen. *Paul: Apostle to the Gentiles*. Translated by O. C. Dean, Jr. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993. Pp. xiv + 513. \$30.00.

Jürgen Becker is a senior scholar, Professor of New Testament and Judaic Studies at Kiel, Germany, and formerly a pastor in Hamburg. His book on Paul draws widely on his earlier research and writing on Paul, on the Qumran Scrolls, and on Luther's commentaries on Galatians and the Gospel of John. It is only appropriate, therefore, that this volume should now be made available to the nonspecialist in the English-speaking world.

Written without footnotes, this book aims to give a nontechnical overview of Paul. In an effort to bring together biography and theology, Becker introduces his work with a discussion of his sources and a detailed treatment of Pauline chronology. Relying on Luke's Acts he offers a brief description of the Tarsus period in Paul's life. It was there (not Jerusalem) that Paul most likely encountered Pharisaism and Jewish apocalypticism. Becker's critical sifting of Acts provides information about Paul's Roman citizenship, his enormous debt to the church at Antioch, and the basic outline of his mission strategy, all of which frame and inform Becker's thesis.

According to Becker, the first twelve years after Paul's call, he was either

in Antioch or serving with Barnabas as a missionary commissioned by the church in Antioch. These turn out to be the most formative years for Paul's mission and theology. Although his thinking develops as he encounters new situations, the foundations of Paul's new thinking laid in Antioch never change. There Paul became convinced of the importance of the gospel for the gentiles without reference to the law or to circumcision. There the features of Paul's gospel were generated: a theology of election that was inclusive, an experience of the Spirit that gave birth to a new being and empowered the enslaved, and a cult of baptism that ratified the work of the gospel without circumcision. This inclusive gospel unleashed some vicious competition for members, and Paul's embracing of non-Jews that removed the boundary between the people of God and the world was seen as a declaration of war. What was once an intra-Jewish religious expression became a rival Christian religion. The gospel Paul heard at Antioch was based on the death and resurrection of Christ, inaugurated the age of the Spirit, and laid the basis for justification by faith.

In Paul's independent missionary activity, first at Corinth, then at Ephesus, and finally on the journey to Jerusalem, Paul's theology passes through three phases, each related to the other. In the first we see the emergence of his theology of election. For example, 1 Thessalonians appears so soon after Paul's Antiochene period that its understanding of election articulates Antiochene theology. In the second phase (Ephesus) the theology of the cross is evident (especially 1 Corinthians), and in the third period, Galatians, Philippians 3:2-21, and Romans articulate a theology of justification. In these chapters of the book Becker treats the letters in order, and it becomes clear that the Christian Paul has almost entirely disposed of the Jewish period of his life. No longer is Paul called a Jew but a "former" Jew, a "former" Pharisee, and an apostate from Judaism. Being a Christian for Paul means necessarily the exclusion of Judaism. The law no longer affects the person open to God and neighbor but applies only to "the *egocentric person who 'covets.'*" Increasingly it is clear that the law and faith are total opposites, and that opposition is not context sensitive but universally valid. While Becker is aware that at Qumran and elsewhere the juxtaposition between law and faith, between Torah and grace does not exist, he feels that in the heat of battle Paul may in fact distort what was the case in order to convince his readers.

The book ends with a discussion of Paul the martyr on the way to Jerusalem with the collection and anticipating the same fate that came to Jesus for speaking against law and temple. Only here does Becker come to his discussion of Romans 9-11, although his treatment of Romans 1-8 appeared nearly a hundred pages earlier.

While some may call this book imaginative and groundbreaking, creative and innovative, it does raise questions. Becker places a great deal of empha-

sis on the Antiochene period of Paul's "Christian" life and its seminal influence on his theology. Yet Paul himself only mentions Antioch once in his letters (Gal. 2:11). While Acts does give importance to Paul's experience in Antioch, nothing is said about the theology of the Antiochene church. This overvaluation of the Antiochene influence on Paul leads Becker to undervalue the importance of the epistolary contexts for shaping Paul's basic convictions or even the substance of his gospel. In his reaction against those who use Paul's letters to sketch the position of his opponents against which Paul's theology is then constructed, Becker may have overreacted.

Especially troublesome is Becker's tendency to make the law Paul's *bête noire* even in letters in which there is no discussion of the law. To say that Paul's silence about the law in some letters is a criticism of the law (because Paul has decided that the law is simply not worth mentioning) is placing a burden on Paul's silence that it cannot bear. This tendency is related to another in this book, namely, to disassociate Paul from his Jewishness. It is somewhat anachronistic to pit the "Christian" Paul against Paul the Jew since Paul nowhere uses the term "Christian" or "Christianity" to designate a separate religion. Yet Becker refers to Paul as the "former" Jew, the "former" Pharisee, and the apostate Jew. In light of 2 Corinthians 11:22 ("Are [present tense] they Hebrews? So am I.") such statements seem to be at odds with Paul's own self-description.

Finally, Becker's deferral of his discussion of Romans 9-11 to the final pages of his book, disassociated from his discussion of Romans 1-8, is especially misleading. For in Romans 9-11 Paul does appear to be raising a question of the reliability of God's promises to the covenant people, Israel. Here we are dealing with a question of continuity. Becker appears to downplay the importance of Paul's prediction that "all Israel will be saved" (11:26) as a Christian prophecy. And, Becker adds, we know that Paul himself has reservations about Christian prophecy. Prophecy is after all imperfect. What must we conclude from this caveat? Is the implication that all Israel may *not* be saved?

This book will challenge the intelligent reader, will raise questions about trends in Pauline interpretation, and will surely become one of the most discussed books on Paul to appear in recent years. I recommend it highly.

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Roloff, Jürgen. *The Revelation of John: A Continental Commentary*. Translated by John E. Alsup. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993. Pp. xi + 275. \$25.00.

This commentary makes available to an English-speaking audience the 1984 German commentary of Jürgen Roloff, Professor of New Testament at the University of Erlangen. Following an introduction exploring the

genre, original situation, and structure of Revelation, Roloff moves through the text by section, offering for each passage a new translation, an opening discussion of the literary form or an analysis, and a verse-by-verse commentary. The book also contains a select bibliography, several helpful indices, and a map. Issues related to the interpretation of a passage are also dealt with in a number of excursions, some of which are especially helpful and thought provoking (such as those on the relationship of the seven trumpets and seven bowls and on the millennium, which includes a brief history of interpretation).

Through his commentary, Roloff seeks to explore how Revelation is "still a legitimate expression of the gospel," and not a "peripheral" document within the New Testament. He treats the text as it has come down to us, rather than reconstructing a hypothetical original and commenting on the reconstruction (unlike the commentaries of R. H. Charles and J. Massyngberde Ford). The meaning of Revelation lies, for Roloff, in John's arrangement of, revisions of, and departures from the traditional material underlying the text. His commentary thus provides a very fine guide to the Old Testament, Apocryphal, and Pseudepigraphical traditions (as well as other oriental traditions) behind John's images. Such an approach does not seek to undermine the affirmation of the prophet's inspiration.

The vision of God's throne and the Lamb (4:1-5:14) stands as the center of Revelation in Roloff's interpretation. John proclaims throughout the lordship of Jesus Christ over history, even in the experiences of war, hunger, famine, and plague (6:1-8). The question of the place of the church is also of central concern for John. The martyrs under the altar raise the cry for justice for God's people, who are depicted throughout as a community gathered together awaiting God's final triumph. The challenge to John's addressees is revealed in chapters 12 and 13, which unfold in an intentional parody in the vision of the throne of God and the Lamb. The readers are faced with the increasing demands of the emperor cult, and are called by John "not to come to terms uncritically with all political and social regulations, but rather to raise their voices with criticism and warning wherever state and society develop totalitarian characteristics and give way to the constantly present temptation of a cult of power." Such powers, however, are only the manifestations of a defeated enemy and can be resisted with confidence (cf. 12:10-12).

Roloff shows deep concern to understand the images of judgment and destruction in Revelation. The seven seals and seven trumpets call the world to repentance and salvation and point to God's power. These invitations refused, however, there remains only God's judgment upon God's adversaries and their followers. Their destruction is inseparable from the saving activity of God, who thus creates the "occasion for new life and



righteousness" and "procures justice for the salvation community before their enemies." Interesting in this regard is Roloff's understanding of the much-debated millennium as the expression of God's complete redemption of this world, claiming it fully for God's dominion before creating a new one. The new creation is the "final demonstration of God's creative power and his sovereignty over history."

Roloff's commentary is a welcome guide to Revelation, strong in uncovering the traditions behind the text that illumine John's meaning and lucid in addressing important issues in the interpretation of the text. Pastors especially will welcome this commentary, as it presents many fresh ideas regarding some of the more troublesome aspects of Revelation without blunting the seer's bite. A possible shortcoming is the dearth of references to nineteenth- and twentieth-century interpreters. The reader is thus left on her or his own to find alternative views or further investigations of the issues. An *annotated* bibliography would have been a helpful counterbalance. While I would question a number of details in his commentary, there is no question that Roloff provides a solid starting point for the investigation of this powerful book.

David A. deSilva  
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Wainwright, Arthur W. *Mysterious Apocalypse: Interpreting the Book of Revelation*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993. Pp. 293. \$19.95.

Over the centuries the Book of Revelation has given rise to a bewildering assortment of conflicting interpretations. Its interpreters include not only biblical scholars and members of the church hierarchy but also artists, poets, and experts in the natural and social sciences. The book *Mysterious Apocalypse* by Arthur Wainwright, Professor of New Testament at Candler School of Theology, Emory University, provides an informative survey of the use made of the Apocalypse in political and religious controversy, in art and literature, and in Christian worship. Rather than merely listing a succession of various commentators and their opinions about Revelation, the author provides a topical and chronological guide to the diverse interpretations and influences of the book.

Following a preliminary chapter, Wainwright organizes his survey under three headings, "The Millennium and History," "Critical Approaches to the Apocalypse," and "The Apocalypse and Human Experience." In the first part the author discusses millenarianism in the early church, during the Middle Ages, and its revival in the growth of prophetic movements in modern times. The reader will be amazed by the variety of bizarre interpretations that have been given to the account written by the man of Patmos.



Reference is made even to the disastrous consequences of David Koresh's control of the cult called the Branch Davidians near Waco, Texas.

In the second part, which discusses critical analyses of the Apocalypse, the reader is introduced to such matters as the authorship, date, and sources of Revelation, as well as various schools of interpretation. One of these is the contemporary-historical approach that attempts to relate the book's allusions to particular acts of persecution initiated by the Roman government. Other approaches involve literary criticism, the social sciences, and theology. Under the last-mentioned topic Wainwright touches briefly upon controversies concerning the question of the relevance of the message of Revelation for all generations.

It is this last topic that Wainwright develops further in the third and final part, "The Apocalypse and Human Experience." Interpreters of the book have sought to learn its message for the corporate life of the church and for the affairs of states and nations. Others have used the book to express their dreams for the transformation of human society. Its images have stimulated the imagination of writers and artists, and its words have been appropriated in worship and liturgy. In short, to an extraordinary extent the themes of the Apocalypse have become part of the general cultural heritage, attracting even non-Christians by their dramatic power.

A general index and a scripture index conclude this informative and reader-friendly book. By consulting the former, one can find a wealth of documented information on how the Apocalypse has been interpreted through history, from Papias, Irenaeus, and Augustine to C. I. Scofield and Hal Lindsay, from Rudolf Bultmann to Rudolf Steiner, from Christina Rossetti to D. H. Lawrence. By consulting the latter one can learn how various persons, including Wainwright himself, have interpreted this or that passage throughout the twenty-two chapters of Revelation. When used along with the traditional kind of commentary that goes consecutively throughout the Apocalypse, Wainwright's historical survey will assist the reader in developing an authentic and responsible exegesis of the Apocalypse.

Bruce M. Metzger  
Princeton Theological Seminary

Ehrman, Bart D. *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. Pp. xiii + 314. \$45.00.

Textual criticism of the New Testament involves not only knowledge of languages and paleography, but also the history of the development of Christian doctrine. Bart D. Ehrman, a graduate of Princeton Theological

Seminary (M.Div. and Ph.D.) and now a professor in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, has produced the first full-length work that explores the social history of early Christianity and the textual tradition of the documents of the New Testament. Written in a clear and interesting style, the volume traces how the early struggles between "heresy" and "orthodoxy" occasionally affected the wording of certain passages in the scriptures.

More than one church father charged heretics with modifying the scriptures in order to promote aberrant doctrines. There was, however, also a temptation for orthodox scribes to modify scriptural texts so that they would more directly support current beliefs and practices. For example, at the close of the Markan narrative of the healing of a boy with a spirit, the disciples ask Jesus why they had been unable to cast it out. According to the earlier and better manuscripts of Mark 9:29 Jesus replies, "This kind [of spirit] can come out only through prayer." The later manuscripts, however, add the words "and fasting." Obviously, after ascetical practices had become prevalent in the church, copyists supplemented the text so as to provide dominical authority for fasting.

Ehrman concentrates his investigation on passages that bear on christology. He examines how scribes of the second and third centuries occasionally altered the wording of New Testament texts in order to heighten the explicitness of christological doctrine or modified texts that might seem to lend support to heretical views. Focusing on three such heresies, Ehrman discusses how orthodox responses affected texts that were debated by these groups. He devotes a chapter to Ebionite adoptionists, who claimed that Christ was a man but not God; another chapter to docetists like Marcion, who claimed that Christ was God but not a man; and a third to Gnostics like the Ptolemaeans, who claimed that Christ was two beings, one divine and one human.

One or two examples will illustrate the kind of investigation undertaken here. In Luke 2:33 the earlier manuscripts state that Jesus' "father and mother began to marvel" at the things that were being said about him. The majority of later Greek manuscripts, along with a number of Old Latin, Syriac, and Coptic witnesses, changed the text so as to read, "Joseph and his mother began to marvel." Ehrman comments: "The change makes perfect sense, given the orthodox view that Joseph was in fact not Jesus' father. There can be little doubt that in this case the majority text represents a corruption rather than the original reading."

Another instance of a change introduced in order to prevent a text from being used against the teaching of the church is found in some manuscripts of Matthew 24:36. Here the earliest and best representatives of the Alexandrian and Western types of text read, "Concerning that day and hour no

one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." Because adoptionists would make use of the phrase "nor the Son" to argue that Jesus was not divine, the majority of the later manuscripts omit the problematic words.

Besides learning much concerning the social and intellectual history of early Christianity, readers of Ehrman's book will also understand why the King James Version of the New Testament incorporates each of the three examples of "orthodox corruptions" mentioned above.

Bruce M. Metzger  
Princeton Theological Seminary

Scroggs, Robin. *The Text and the Times: New Testament Essays for Today*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993. Pp. xii + 292. \$17.95.

Robin Scroggs has taught New Testament at Union Theological Seminary in New York since 1986 and previously for many years at Chicago Theological Seminary. In this volume fifteen of his essays and addresses are collected, beginning with his inaugural address at Chicago Theological Seminary in 1969 ("Tradition, Freedom, and the Abyss") and concluding with an address given in 1991 ("Can the New Testament be Relevant for the Twenty-First Century?"). Most, but not all, of these pieces were published earlier. Princeton Theological Seminary's J. C. Beker sums up the importance of this collection in a comment reproduced on the cover: "These essays demonstrate clearly the courage of a New Testament scholar who is willing to venture out of the ghetto of New Testament studies in order to speak imaginatively to the issues of our world." Looking back over his career, Scroggs writes: "Given these times in which I have been placed, how could I not be compelled to ask what the New Testament had to say to contemporary realities swirling around me?"

These essays exhibit Scroggs' admirable willingness to engage lively and controversial issues before they become fashionable or *de rigueur* among biblical scholars or in the church. (One thinks immediately of his essential and courageous study, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*, published in 1983). Two essays represent early examples of the now very common sociological approach to the New Testament and earliest Christianity: "The Earliest Christian Communities as Sectarian Movement" (1975) and "The Sociological Interpretation of the New Testament: The Present State of Research" (1979). These essays are strikingly free of jargon and present various views fairly, concisely, and clearly. Scroggs' critical insight into the possibilities and the limitations of this approach make these two seminal essays benchmarks of biblical scholarship. They remain essential reading today for anyone interested in the social dimensions of early, and contemporary, Christianity.

Three essays provide early and illuminating attempts on the part of a biblical scholar (and a man) to address the issue of women in ministry and in the church: "Paul and the Eschatological Woman" (a composite of two essays dating from 1972 and 1974), "The Next Step: A Common Humanity" (1978), and "How We Understand Scripture When It Speaks with Forked Tongue" (1979). I remember the stir the first of these essays caused among students, both women and men, at Union Seminary in the early 1970s. This essay, along with the other two, can still be read with profit. Another three essays show Scroggs using and adapting insights gained from psychoanalysis for understanding and appropriating Paul: "The Heuristic Value of a Psychoanalytic Model in the Interpretation of Pauline Theology" (1976), "Eros and Agape in Paul" (1972), and "New Being: Renewed Mind: New Perception: Paul's View of the Source of Ethical Insight" (1982).

More recent essays deal with Paul's theocentrism (1986), the use of the New Testament in ethics today (1984), the future of New Testament theology (1988), and a comparison of "eschatological existence" in Matthew and Paul (1989). The book concludes with an older piece on teaching the Bible to lay adults (1978) and the previously mentioned essay dating from 1991 in which Scroggs looks forward to the next century.

In this last essay, Scroggs writes: "Those of us who are neither cultured despisers nor literalists, but somewhere in the middle, live our lives in a very ambiguous relation to the Bible. This has always been the case." Here too the leitmotif of all these essays comes clearly to the fore: *transformation*, defined by Scroggs, as "world-switching" or, more fully, as "the giving up of a self-understanding based on domination and aggrandizement and control over others, and the appropriation of a new self-understanding in which the self is manifested in the power of self-giving love." Such self-giving love, "symbolized by the degrading and humiliating public execution of God's child," is what the New Testament is basically all about for Scroggs, and why it will continue to be relevant into the next century and beyond. Self-giving love is in effect the criterion the New Testament itself provides for its continuing interpretation and use.

These essays exhibit the self-giving love of which the author writes. Scroggs is disarmingly and refreshingly humble in the way he has carried out what he considers to be only his duty as a scholar of the New Testament and as a human being who is also a Christian, living in the present time. He emphasizes that all his essays are reports from along the way; they do not pretend to be the final word. Like Paul, Scroggs has sought to be not so much relevant and right as faithful and timely. For this reason alone, these essays remain valuable and instructive.

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Riches, John K. *A Century of New Testament Study*. Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International; Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 1993. Pp. x + 246. \$17.00.

Perhaps best known for his 1971 co-translation into English of Rudolf Bultmann's *Das Evangelium des Johannes*, John K. Riches is now Professor of Divinity and Biblical Criticism and head of the Department of Biblical Studies at Glasgow University. In this retrospective survey, he presents less a map of his field of New Testament studies than, in his words, "a travel narrative, a record of my own wanderings in the history of a discipline."

With Riches' predilections taking us in tow, we often anchor at obscure ports of call, while steaming by expected sights. Many major New Testament scholars and theologians are not even mentioned, while others are mentioned only in passing. Among newer feminist voices, only Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza finds inclusion, and Riches' travels never reach the recent work of Crossan, Kloppenborg, Mack, or Meier. Hence, there is no evaluation of the current debate about Jesus as a Cynic-like itinerant. By contrast to these omissions, Riches devotes some eight pages to an exposition and defense of his own book, *Jesus and the Transformation of Judaism* (1980), spends some ten pages on the ideas of his friend, Heikki Räisänen, and, gives a fifth of the chapter devoted to the future of New Testament theology to a 1969 work of Hans Urs von Balthasar, which was also co-translated into English by—Riches.

What stops our author does make as he meanders through his discipline fall into three stages: a pre-Bultmann section summarizing New Testament study at the end of the last century and the findings of the History of Religions research typified by Johannes Weiss and Wilhelm Bousset; a Bultmann section, recounting his existentialist interpretation of the message of Jesus, the kerygma of Paul (albeit without reference to Bultmann's commentary on Second Corinthians), and the Gospel of John; and a post-Bultmann section, with chapters surveying some of the newer proposals regarding Jesus, the Gospel of Mark, Paul, John, and New Testament theology. (No attention is given to the Pastoral Epistles, very little to Matthew and Luke-Acts, and only passing reference to the Book of Revelation.)

Each chapter in these three sections consists largely of book reviews, often longwinded summaries short on incisive analysis. For example, in his chapter on "New Studies of Jesus," after reviewing nearly a dozen books on the subject, Riches ventures a six-point summary of all we can say historically about Jesus: 1) a man called Jesus of Nazareth existed "who was a prominent religious figure"; 2) "He was baptized by and an associate of John the Baptist"; 3) "He called disciples (probably 12), performed works of healing and exorcism, taught his disciples and a wider audience and engaged



in controversy with Jewish teachers of the Law"; 4) "He associated with tax collectors and sinners and this caused offence to some of the Jewish devout"; 5) "He performed some kind of prophetic action in the Temple"; and 6) "He was crucified by the Romans at the instigation of some of the Jewish leaders." Riches neglects to add that all of these points, given some nuancing, were already made in the 1920s by Rudolf Bultmann! Despite Qumran, despite refinements in, and advances beyond, form criticism, and despite the employment of the social sciences, historical-critical methods have apparently not advanced agreement about Jesus in seventy years. *That* historical fact would have been worth pondering in a volume supposedly dedicated to surveying this century-old paradigm of interpretation increasingly seen as anomalous from the meagerness or banality of its findings.

Who should read this book? Beginning doctoral students in New Testament will find a helpful orientation to their guild, especially where Riches clearly summarizes developments from Weiss' monograph on *Jesus' Proclamation of the Kingdom of God* (1892) to the first edition of Barth's *Romans* (1919). Pastors seeking reorientation to the scientific study of the scriptures and, hence, dialogue with many of the figures Riches omits, yet with an eye to theological import and ecclesial practice, would do better to turn to Brevard S. Childs' *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments: Theological Reflection on the Christian Bible*.

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Gerrish, B. A. *Grace and Gratitude: The Eucharistic Theology of John Calvin*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993. Pp. xii + 210. \$13.95.

The author of this book is the John Nuveen Professor and Professor of Historical Theology in the Divinity School of the University of Chicago. He has become a distinguished historian of Calvinism, as two of his books demonstrate: *Tradition and the Modern World: Reformed Theology in the Nineteenth Century* (1978) and *The Old Protestantism and the New: Essays on the Reformation Heritage* (1982). Gerrish's new book is most illuminating, making essential distinctions and definitions. While it honors Calvin, it also indicates where further clarification of his thought is needed.

Apart from being the first major study of Calvin's eucharistic theology in twenty-five years, it demonstrates convincingly that Calvin's doctrine of the eucharist, with its central analogy of "feeding on Christ" as the Bread of Life and of the Father's generosity in nourishing his children and their response of gratitude (or ingratitude), is also a central motif of Calvin's piety. This is illustrated vividly in Calvin's accounts of creation, the work of Christ, baptism, and the Lord's Supper.

Gerrish's aim is to show that Calvin's understanding of the eucharist is a better indication of Calvin's primary theme than is the double decree, although both were subject to controversies. Gerrish holds that in the *Institutes* from first to last Calvin clings to the image of the spiritual banquet and claims "the holy banquet is simply the liturgical enactment of the theme of grace and gratitude that lies at the heart of Calvin's entire theology."

Calvin's doctrine of baptism does, however, create difficulties. He can claim that the children of believers have been born into the covenant people and that the sacrament is a promise of future repentance and faith for the infants. Calvin asks what risk is there that children receive some part of the grace they will later enjoy in its bountiful fullness? Gerrish replies: "Well, Calvin, I should think that the risk is that any such admission threatens to undermine the categories of sacramental thinking that you have so far relied on: goodwill, promise, knowledge, assurance." The real issue is whether the concept of a visible Word can survive the notion of infant regeneration.

Gerrish finds another difficulty in Calvin's doctrine of the eucharist. There is an ambiguity in Calvin's interpretation of the term "feeding on Christ." Is it more than believing in Christ? John 6:51 says, "The bread which I shall give is my flesh." Calvin does not see this reference by Christ to his future crucifixion as simply calling for belief in the efficacy of his death. For Calvin, Christ intends that we now feast on the sacred banquet. He also adds that it is the Spirit diffused through the flesh that can be sensed as the believer turns his or her mind heavenward.

Gerrish clearly distinguishes Calvin's eucharistic theology from Luther's and Zwingli's, though his sympathies are with the former. Perhaps Calvin's greatest contribution is to see the eucharist as "two acts of self-giving: Christ's giving of himself to the Church and the Church's giving itself to God. It is this double self-giving that makes the Supper both embody and represent the perpetual exchange of grace and gratitude that shapes Calvin's theology."

This book is an outstanding work of historical and theological scholarship both in its central thesis and in its clarifying of the few obfuscations by Calvin. In the process, Gerrish refutes the many misrepresentations of Calvin's critics.

Horton Davies  
Princeton University

Lindberg, Carter. *Beyond Charity: Reformation Initiatives for the Poor*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993. Pp. x + 235. \$14.95.

Like the invitation to the marriage feast in Matthew's Gospel (22:2-14), the invitation to reconsider common historical and theological stereotypes

is one that often proves unacceptable to those who need it most. Carter H. Lindberg, Professor of Church History at the School of Theology and Graduate College of Boston University, extends just such an invitation in *Beyond Charity*. This invitation involves passionately held convictions that touch contemporary controversies about the origins and merits of poverty and riches among Christians and society in general. It is likely to be threatening.

In this case the invitation is a book, but it is more. It is a neatly packaged project. The project consists of at least three ingredients. The first is a candid look at the world of the poor in the late Middle Ages. Lindberg opens a variety of sources that help to describe, in both concrete social and theological terms, how the medieval world, including the medieval church, understood and managed the complicated problems of poor people and rich people living side by side. Nonspecialists will struggle with the word study in chapter one. As with most careful etymologies, there is no substitute for this window into the changing language that reflects and shapes the attitudes of a time.

Attempts to describe "the extent and levels of poverty" in the late Middle Ages are a fascinating glimpse into the data of the social historian. The modern reader confronts concrete elements that help the Middle Ages to emerge from this or that interpretive school into a comparability with our own world that is startling and disturbing. Attempts to calculate "the minimal human requirement for food, satisfied in the cheapest possible manner" are but one example of this. The book takes seriously kinds of historical evidence that are not found in most theology courses: tax registers, local ordinances, legislation regarding begging and beggars, hospital and foundation records, testaments and wills. Lindberg is a careful and critical guide to this material.

The second element of Lindberg's invitation is an important methodological argument about the relationship of theological ideas to social policy. In a way that most persons engaged in Christian ministry must find exciting and energizing, Lindberg is willing to argue that ideas do influence reality—even social and political reality. He builds his case from both Reformation and Catholic evidence. Unlike those who now find it chic to point out that Luther was a "product of his time," Lindberg demonstrates the enormous, even revolutionary, effect that individual theologians can have.

Augustine's influential teaching on "charity" as the medieval way of ordering the complex relationships of poor and rich is only one example. Luther's address "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation" begins to articulate the theological underpinnings—not for more theological disputation, but for real social change in the form of the establishment of the "common chest." The evangelical "church orders" become a valuable series

of case studies. Reforms in Catholic cities such as Ypres are also documented. This book makes plain its author's perspective that religion is important for social change—whether during the long Middle Ages or at the Reformation or Catholic Reformation. His judgment is that some social historians are “unnecessarily reductionistic.”

The third element of Lindberg's project is to provide a glimpse into the world of sources on this topic by making them accessible to the reader of English. Selected translations of Canon Law, excerpts from Hus and Erasmus, and actual legislation from the cities of Wittenberg (1522) and Ypres (1525) are included in part two of the book. A generous bibliography (not limited to English) and important footnotes throughout the text also advance this part of Lindberg's project.

The invitation to a “more credible Christian community” where the worship of God affects attitudes toward poor and rich alike, and where such attitudes shape the social order, was answered under the most difficult circumstances in the sixteenth century. Carter Lindberg's work reintroduces Christians to the resources of the church's tradition on this most contemporary problem of the poor and the rich.

Paul R. Nelson

Division for Ministry, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Stanley, Brian. *The History of the Baptist Missionary Society, 1792-1992*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1992. Pp. xix + 564. \$59.95.

Titles of books are often chosen not to describe the contents but to attract readers. Here is a book with a title that could well have been changed simply because potential readers may ignore it, thinking that any history of a missionary society is probably another of those tedious, interminable, hagiographic, promotional pieces designed to preserve the record while concealing the blunders.

This is an official history commissioned by the Baptist Missionary Society of Great Britain. But unlike most works of this kind, it is a solid, objective, extraordinarily readable and informative work. Few mission histories, in my judgment—authorized or not—measure up to the quality of this thoroughly researched and skillfully written study.

Stanley, a church historian and lecturer at Trinity College, Bristol, is a recognized specialist on the modern missionary movement. Although his history is written to commemorate the bicentennial of the founding of the Society and the sending of William Carey to India, the magnitude of the story as well as the vivid details make it as absorbing as it is astonishing. If one wants to understand the impulses that motivated eighteenth- and nineteenth-century missionaries to leave their families and homelands and venture into a largely unknown and often inhospitable world, their uncompli-



cated theology and remarkably diverse methods of work, their incredible sacrifices and meager rewards, and their notable achievements and frequent failures, one needs to read this book.

The material is presented in a conventional fashion—geographically and chronologically—but this makes the book all the more readable and useful. And though the role of the Society is the framework Stanley employs to develop his narrative, what the Society and its administrators did is almost incidental, overshadowed by an abundance of biographical and other broad-ranging historical information.

Readers from the Reformed tradition will note, I trust, how close theologically English Baptists and Presbyterians have been. Some, however, may be surprised by the assertion that the well-known American Presbyterian missionary to China, John L. Nevius—whose philosophy was so decisive in the beginnings of Presbyterian work in Korea—was in fact greatly influenced in his thinking by a Baptist missionary to China, Timothy Richard.

The contributions of the missionaries, not simply the Baptists, are carefully recounted as are their shortcomings, such as their naive idealism, shortsightedness, ethnocentrism, nationalism, and their common reluctance to ordain nationals and entrust the work to them. This is what makes this history credible as well as unlike so many missionary chronicles. Stanley has written about extraordinary people with common human frailties. What they attempted and what they accomplished, however, were far from commonplace.

My only misgiving about this otherwise superior book is Stanley's account of contemporary developments, particularly his discussions of Baptist work in Angola and Brazil from the early 1950s to the present. The analytical detachment so evident in the rest of the book is somewhat muted in these sections because, I suspect, he is writing about individuals—administrators and missionaries—he knows and admires. Polybius once said that historians rightly and typically favor their own countries and people. At the same time, he added, "readers should be very attentive to and critical of historians, and they in turn should be constantly on their guard." How difficult it is to maintain perspective when writing about people and events too close at hand.

Alan Neely  
Princeton Theological Seminary

Barnett, Victoria. *For the Soul of the People: Protestant Protest against Hitler*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992. Pp. viii + 358. \$30.00.

Despite its subtitle, Victoria Barnett's fascinating and insightful book, *For the Soul of the People: Protestant Protest against Hitler*, reveals the disturbingly little and ineffective level of that Protestant protest. This was partic-



ularly true in the early years of the Nazi regime when, perhaps, determined protest might have had greater effect. Thus the book is neither hagiographic nor a martyrology. Instead, using interviews conducted during the 1980s with some of those Protestants who did protest against Hitler, Barnett renders the much greater service of helping to illuminate the cultural, political, and religious considerations responsible for German Protestant hesitancy to resist National Socialism.

These oral histories form the documentary core of the book, but Barnett does not limit her discussion to the era of the Third Reich. To her credit she also explores her subjects' attitudes and experiences prior to 1933, so as to expose the cultural context that conditioned responses to National Socialism. In addition, Barnett carries the story beyond 1945, arguing that the struggle against Hitler continued long after the fall of the Third Reich in Protestant appraisals of the War and the Holocaust, as well as in their understanding of the nature and mission of the church, Christian responsibility in politics, and in their attitudes towards the differing regimes of divided Germany.

While oral history establishes the book's originality, it is also its weakness. Barnett allows for memory's distortion, verifying personal recollection against less mutable sources whenever possible, but the anecdotal nature of her material raises problems for its general applicability. In the absence of more widely representative evidence it is difficult to determine how characteristic the experiences of Barnett's interviewees were for German Protestantism as a whole. The problem is compounded by the fact that most of those Barnett consulted were pastors, spouses of pastors, or held other positions in German church structures. This leaves the reader with little understanding of lay participation, or even the numbers involved in Protestant protest against the Nazi regime. The question is made all the more intriguing by one pastor's comment that there were "too many pastors, too few lay people" in the Confessing Church movement.

Barnett makes clear, however, that Protestant protest to Hitler was late in forming, ambiguous in its objectives, and of limited effect. The church's ability to form an early critique of National Socialism was compromised by the intense patriotism and wounded national pride prevalent in German society after World War I. This, combined with the domestic chaos and fear of communism that characterized the Weimar years, led many Protestants, even among those who later led the Confessing Church, to welcome Adolf Hitler. Thus, Martin and Wilhelm Niemöller, leaders of the Confessing Church, acknowledged their prior membership in the Nazi Party, Martin joining in 1933, Wilhelm as early as 1925.

When Protestant disenchantment with National Socialism developed, an institutional response was further hampered by the German tradition of ecclesiastical noninvolvement in politics. Initial protest was limited to the

threat posed by the "German Christians" who professed a form of Christianity compatible with Nazi ideology. It was only as government interference in ecclesiastical affairs grew that the Confessing Church movement entered the political arena. Even then, except for what many regarded as the dangerous radicals around the Bonhoeffers and Niemöllers, the Confessing Church was reluctant to carry the protest beyond questions of ecclesiastical independence. Consequently protest against Nazism itself was left to individuals largely deprived of institutional support. In this isolation many who believed the Nazi state was morally illegitimate felt protest was a futile gesture. Even those like Bonhoeffer who did resist on theological grounds looked for support to the military and old governing elite, not to the church.

Ultimately *For the Soul of the People* raises several provocative questions whose pertinency carries beyond geographic and historical frontiers. In holding before us the German Protestants' struggle with issues of theology and culture, church and state, spiritual versus patriotic duty, and the difference between futile gesture and spiritual heroism, the past raises questions for the church both in the present and for the future.

James C. Deming  
Princeton Theological Seminary

Keller, Rosemary Skinner. *Georgia Harkness: For Such a Time as This*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992. Pp. 336. \$24.95.

I might have missed this book had not my wife read it first and then passed it on to me saying, "This will help you in your teaching." It has. This life of Georgia Harkness is a story that needs to be read, especially by those concerned for the struggle of women to achieve recognition as ministers and theologians. Georgia Harkness was deeply involved in that struggle, and Rosemary Keller has served us well by writing this absorbing, enlightening, and heartening account.

Rosemary Keller is a professor of the history of religion and American culture at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois, where Georgia Harkness served as a member of the faculty from 1939 to 1950. The Seminary's extensive collection of her private papers and published works along with three dissertations written about her were therefore accessible. What Keller did not find in the archives and library she obtained by traveling to Harkness' birthplace as well as to other locations where Harkness lived, studied, and taught, interviewing along the way a large number of individuals—family and friends—who knew her.

Georgia Harkness was the first woman in the United States to be recognized as a professional theologian, no mean achievement. But official acceptance of her was delayed inordinately, not that she lacked academic creden-

tials or had failed to demonstrate competence as a theologian. She was without question qualified by years of teaching experience and by the number of theological essays and books she published beginning in 1924. It was not until 1940, however—and then somewhat grudgingly it appears—that she was recommended for a professorship in applied theology, nearly twenty years after she had begun teaching religion and theology. Her career spanned more than half a century, from secondary schools in upstate New York to Elmira and Mt. Holyoke Colleges, Garrett Biblical Institute (later Garrett-Evangelical Seminary), and concluding at the Pacific School of Religion. Few scholars matched her output, and the reputation she achieved and her extraordinary influence were doubtless enhanced by the steady stream of her publications—thirty-seven books plus more than 150 essays and articles—an extraordinary feat for anyone.

Born into Methodism, Harkness was active in her denomination and in a local church her entire life. Likewise, she was a committed ecumenist who supported and participated continually in the work of the National and World Councils of Churches.

Harkness of course had her critics. Some dismissed her writings as being popular, that is, for laypersons. Others were perturbed by her opposition to war and militarism. Not a few resented her lobbying for the full recognition and ordination of women to ministry. She was, it must be admitted, her own kind of feminist, and likely some readers will judge her to have been artful and accommodating. These criticisms are, I believe, without merit. She may have enjoyed her role as the lone female in circles dominated by men, but she did not shrink from asserting herself and challenging her male counterparts. Her public confrontation and clash with Karl Barth in 1948 is a notable example.

From her youth, however, Georgia Harkness struggled with self-doubt, and her initial failure professionally could have been disastrous and led her in an entirely different direction had she been made of lesser stuff. But she was convinced that her calling was to be a teacher. "As far back as I can remember," she once said, "I expected when I grew up to be a teacher. No other vocational possibility ever crossed my mind."

Given the impediments she faced, however, it is astonishing that she became a renowned theologian. Many women like her became public school teachers, social workers, or professors of religious education. Others found fulfillment as missionaries, a vocation she did consider. Possibly she would have chosen a different route had it not been for the impact and support of her teacher and advisor at Boston University, Edgar Sheffield Brightman, the Borden Parker Bowne Professor of Philosophy. Though Brightman was only seven years her senior, his influence on her was incalculable and their friendship lifelong.

Harkness' gender, her unabated pacificism, and her "lack of feminine charm" doubtless closed several doors for her professionally. Yet she accomplished what no other woman had before her and not without cost. A severe and prolonged bout with depression is evidence, I believe, of the rejection she often sensed, the loneliness she suffered, and the stress she endured. Despite the obstacles, Georgia Harkness became a celebrated teacher, a prolific writer, a respected theologian, a committed churchperson and ecumenist, and a pioneer who opened the way for other women. She deserves a first-rate biography—and she has it in this engaging account by Rosemary Keller.

Alan Neely  
Princeton Theological Seminary

Findlay, James F., Jr. *Church People in the Struggle: The National Council of Churches and the Black Freedom Movement, 1950-1970*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. Pp. xi + 255. \$35.00.

*Church People in the Struggle* is a book about how the National Council of Churches (NCC) and some of its member churches mobilized support for the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s and how this direct action for racial justice subsequently impacted the NCC and its mainline denominations. Thus, one can learn from this book just how national church structures pushed for open public accommodations and voting rights. One can also learn, if the author is correct in his analysis, how their involvement in this movement for social restructuring changed the churches themselves.

While racial and social views may have been altered by the involvement of the churches, such involvement also gave rise to the controversy and debate within mainline denominations over the appropriateness of their role as direct participants in social activism. For example, when the NCC and certain of its predominantly white member churches took an activist stance against segregation in the South, or de facto segregation in the North, they offended member bodies in the regions and neighborhoods where racial segregation and racism were condoned. Such was the case with the Delta Ministry, a program of the NCC in Mississippi. The Delta Ministry was a national church witness of solidarity with aggrieved black victims. Nevertheless, establishment leaders in Mississippi were often members of local churches of those denominations providing financial support for the Delta Ministry. Therein lay the seeds of contradiction that became the greatest challenge to the NCC and its constituency. By becoming directly engaged in this way, the NCC started what amounted to a family fight.

This contradiction was not confined to the churches. For we are told that



during the height of its involvement in the struggle, the NCC was also engaged in what amounted to collaboration with the FBI in its probe for "communist influence" in the Civil Rights Movement.

Within predominantly white NCC-related churches, the social upheaval of the time also provided the context for challenges by African Americans within those churches to press for their denominations' stronger involvement in the struggle, while relatively conservative whites within those churches formed a backlash of resistance. The rise of black caucuses in white denominations, the emergence of the National Conference of Black Churchmen, and the demand for reparations advanced in the Black Manifesto heightened this tension. While these movements are not as prominent now as they were in the national life of the churches in the late sixties and early seventies, they still form the basis of a persistent irresolution of racial and Christian identities within the denominations. The author's perspectives on this aspect of the period may differ from those of African Americans who were directly involved.

The book provides readers with important information about an era that is vital to understanding the situation of the churches today. It also provides information about some of the individuals who served in pivotal roles during the time in question. For students of this period, there are good points of reference that deserve further study. Several of the pioneers of the struggle mentioned in this volume deserve more detailed attention.

*Church People in the Struggle* shows how the church can impact a major national or international issue. But it is evidently crucial that there be a national vehicle for such work. The Moral Majority of the 1980s understood this very well. If that national vehicle moves beyond the posture taken by its regional and local constituencies, sparks fly. If it does not, the often untenable status quo prevails.

M. William Howard, Jr.  
New York Theological Seminary

Keck, Leander E. *The Church Confident*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993. Pp. 128. \$9.95.

This is a timely book written by a scholar with diversified interests and widely recognized competency, Leander Keck, the Winkley Professor of Biblical Theology and former Dean of Yale Divinity School.

The title of Keck's book, *The Church Confident* (the 1992 Lyman Beecher Lectures), forecasts a balanced design in and by which Keck describes the real malaise in the church but then goes on to ask, "Now what should we do about it?"

The first and intentionally commanding chapter deals with worship and



the praise of God. Keck laments its secularization by church people whose usual litmus test of worship is utilitarian: "I don't get anything out of it!" And this misplaced indicator is active "not only in mainline churches; it appears no less in those that regard themselves as 'evangelical' or 'charismatic.'" Hence, the author's appeal is to the church to have done with praise as a means to an end and to restore it as the end itself. In this the various components of worship must be taken seriously, including preaching, for much of our pulpit presentations currently are nothing more than position papers delivered without the controlled conviction that is the partner of proclamation. It is Keck's opinion that the recovery of the true praise of God in the worship and life of the church is the key to renewal, but the essence of that praise must be every congregation's total reaction to and apprehension of what it means to believe God (not merely to believe *in* God; most people say yes to that). To believe God means a resultant glimpse of his greatness, a feeling within us of the claim of his goodness, and an end to that kind of vagueness that prevents our declaring a "validating YES to the Gospel."

The second chapter (on theology) follows logically upon the first where Keck laments that "one can attend many mainline Protestant churches every Sunday for years and seldom hear the greatness, the judgment and mercy, freedom and integrity of God brought to bear on the day-to-day." Hence the need for "the renewal of serious theology in the mainline churches." For the situation has been that "the teaching of the Christian faith in the Sunday morning service is minimal" due to "the manifest uncertainty about the substance of the Christian faith itself." This uncertainty, moreover, stems from the fact that the theological world currently is "like a state fair without a midway."

Keck does not take kindly—and rightly so—to the busyness of much contemporary theological dialogue that is tinged with Gnosticism or that fusses unduly over the *minutiae* of the language problem (see his excellent discussion of "God-language" on pp. 47-54) or that tires itself over every facet of syncretism and other first cousins of the faddisms of pluralism. "Academic theologians," Keck concludes, "can renew theology FOR the churches, but it is preachers grappling with the meaning of the faith for today who will renew it IN the churches. And isn't that where it really belongs?"

In chapter three (on ethos), Keck addresses the role of the mainline churches in the milieu of public life which he describes as a "continuing conflict." With the shrinkage in formal membership their "standing in society has gone from importance to impotence." This condition "has produced some anxiety" but "in some quarters the rising influence of evangelicals has caused sheer panic." The adverse factors causing such an ethos

came unplanned, for example, the "irreversible pluralization of America" which—to use Tillich's phrase—marks "the end of the Protestant era." Evidences of this include the absence of active laypersons as leaders in institutions academic and ecclesiastical. Granted, but where do we go from here? There are several models: 1) escapism: become countercultural; 2) "resident aliens" (the term of Willimon and Hauerwas), the "navel gazers" in their own world within the world; or 3) the avant-garde where the church and its worship are but a preparation for involvement in social struggle. None of these, however, faces up to what is patently the basic question: Is the church in its witness and activity being accountable to the gospel? This must be recognized as a top priority, and it claims from every church 1) a clear understanding of the nature and role of power, that is, power submitted always to the criticism and judgment of the Christian gospel; and 2) an adequate identification of who we are and of the meaning of salvation, which will give "a chastened sense of identity and meaning to the American people." All this means that churches must forgo "the control complex" and become the pitching coach "who develops the talents of the players." From among these will emerge "trustworthy leaders" who will see and embrace the church's opportunity.

Finally, in chapter four, Keck faces the "how," involving the issue of communication. Generally theological schools have done a fairly good job in their instruction regarding effective preaching as the church's in-house responsibility, with appropriate stress upon content and imaginative packaging. Keck is concerned, however, with the absence of training and strategy in presenting the gospel to "the so-called unchurched" and to "the general public." This calls for an understanding of the positive potential of television, a reality "the mainline churches have not known what to do with." They know they must avoid the cult of the televangelists who, in embracing TV as a means and method, have sold out the heart of the Christian message. The personality boys of early Sunday-morning TV only prove McLuhan's thesis that "the medium is the message" and that means in their case the worst features of the medium.

So, what is suggested here? Four strategies: 1) Get rid of the fear of TV and try to understand it from the inside; 2) befriend experts in the field and listen to them on the inside; 3) sponsor fewer programs, and be sure they are of high quality with respect to the arts, music, message, etc. (more possible interdenominationally); and 4) perceive the difference between programs that reinforce what hearers already believe (which is not evangelism) and those that convert people to become members of the community of faith—the church. For the latter objective, both inside the church building and over the air waves the messenger must "commend the Gospel with confidence and compassion." Is there a difference Christianity makes at the

center of one's life that commends it to insiders and outsiders without qualification?

This volume is a tract for our times. It is a satisfaction to read a thinker whose analyses and cures are relevant to the malaise of contemporary Christian witness and its method, direction, and concerns. Here we have the product of a scholar whose wide and diversified reading, informed churchmanship, and grasp of modern religious trends make what he has to say worth hearing. So, despite the present disquiet, Keck's counsels, if received and exercised, point the church ahead with confidence.

Donald Macleod  
Princeton Theological Seminary

Lathrop, Gordon W. *Holy Things: A Liturgical Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993. Pp. xi + 236. \$24.95.

Recent liturgical revisions by a multitude of denominations have assumed a liturgical theology critical of, yet indebted to, older forms. At the very onset of the revision process Paul Hoon's *The Integrity of Worship* (1971) wrestled with issues to be addressed; but since then, American Protestants have apparently been too busy with renovations to expose the supporting theological foundations. Now Gordon W. Lathrop, Schieren Professor of Liturgy at Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, has examined the underpinnings in a way that will be of great help to all Christians.

The central point is "that the *ordo* of Christian worship establishes the strongest possible signs at the center of the meeting and yet breaks those signs to the meaning of the mercy of God, making the ritual circle permeable and accessible to as wide a group as possible."

*Ordo*, the focus of part one, comprises the basic presuppositions in the pattern of the liturgy, as these find their origin in scripture and their development in church life. True *ordo* consists not of ordered rules that maintain a status quo but instead consists of making old words speak in new ways. Often this juxtaposition of familiarity and transformation occurs through the necessary use of "wrong words"—traditional terms such as "sacrifice" and "priesthood," which must have their original meanings "broken" in order to speak the Christian faith.

Part two deals with holy things—primarily "water, staple food and festive drink, words of prayer, a place and time to gather, and a book"—used by the holy people of God. Here, too, there is a polarity of meanings that resists exclusivism or domestication and thus ever points to the God who is both judgment and grace. To cite a single example on the thorny issue of admitting the unbaptized to the eucharist: "If such a person is accidentally communed . . . no terrible thing has happened. Christ is at home with all

outsiders. But a terrible thing will have happened if there is no way to come deeper, no invitation to the water, no catechumenal process, no continued warning and welcome."

It is crucial that the things of worship are seen to be primary for liturgical theology, while the pattern is secondary. The reversed order of discussion in the book is itself an example of the transformative juxtaposition so crucial in Lathrop's theology.

Part three considers pastoral applications of liturgical theology in ways that are concrete, challenging, and humane. Practical and penetrating questions are asked about the signs and significance of the Sunday gathering, the assembly of those who attend, the synaxis and eucharist, baptism, prayer in the assembly, the observance of *pascha*, environment and art, and daily prayer. The liturgical leadership of the community in relation to the role of the ordained is examined, and the interaction of liturgy and society is set forth.

Lathrop's writing is graceful and often beautiful. He avoids the density and opacity of some treatments of the subject by employing images that capture the attention: the Byzantine court of Justinian and Theodora presenting their gifts to God as depicted in the mosaics of Ravenna; a seventh-century story of St. Peter sending forth Pancratius to establish two congregations; a nineteenth-century Danish bell hanging in a Wisconsin church; contemporary backpackers engaged in word and meal.

But the alluring style belies a profundity that must not be overlooked. Through the necessity of having to meet an editor's deadline, during the hectic pace of Holy Week I read this work more rapidly than I would prefer. Now I must go over it more leisurely throughout Easter in order to grasp its full significance. But that may not be a bad pattern for all readers: Take in the whole at a fairly good clip. Then go back and consider it all again (and again) with great care.

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Wesley Theological Seminary

Procter-Smith, Marjorie, and Janet R. Walton, eds. *Women at Worship: Interpretations of North American Diversity*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993. Pp. xii + 241. \$18.99.

There is a transforming liturgical movement afoot in the sanctuaries and other "holy grounds" of America: from Reformed Jews to Protestants, Roman Catholics to Neo-Pagans—among womanists, feminists, *mujeristas*, and "Zamis" (African-American, women-loving women rooted in the black church tradition). With the burgeoning awareness that "liturgy is women's work" but that women's spiritual needs are generally not being met in



traditional Christian or Jewish congregations, women of diverse faiths are claiming our own ritual authority.

In *Women at Worship: Interpretations of North American Diversity*, Marjorie Procter-Smith and Janet Walton, Associate Professors of Worship, respectively, at Perkins School of Theology and Union Theological Seminary, New York, have brought together a wonderfully rich company of contributors to describe the many forms and meanings of contemporary worship among women. As the editors note, the book is perhaps best understood as "an introductory grammar to the learning of a new ritual language."

*Women at Worship* is a remarkable work in its incorporation of both analytical description and passionate exploration of the new liturgical possibilities being created by women of faith. After an introduction (part one) to feminist liturgical principles, the four chapters constituting part two offer important critique and commentary on several consistent—and, often, unexamined—themes of traditional worship. In particular, the "feminist critique of sin" offered by Ruth Duck, along with Sheila Redmond's probing analysis of denial and family violence in Christian worship, should be required reading for pastors of every theological persuasion.

By far the strongest (and, happily, the longest) segment of the book, however, is the content of part three, "Building Anew: Critique and Commentary on Emerging Feminist Ritual." Contained in these hundred pages are detailed and often moving stories of the creation, evolution, and subsequent sharing of many new ritual traditions—in every case, powerfully expanding the boundaries of liturgy. "Without women's words, the ancient scrolls are incomplete and wanting," writes Rabbi Sue Levi Elwell in her account of creating and reclaiming Rosh Hodesh (new moon) rituals. And Harvard Divinity School Ph.D. candidate Irene Monroe's challenge could well extend beyond the black church to *every* traditional community of faith:

We believe that in order for . . . [dualistic] splits to cease to exist in our worship, we must begin, as frightening as it seems, to look at those ways in which black church worship is presently neither a safe, sacred, nor liberating expression of the divine, but is a ritual expression of the larger society's racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia.

It is significant that certain hallmarks of feminist liturgy emerge throughout these chapters, transcending the diversity of worship expressions represented. Among them, as enumerated by Diane L. Neu in her chapter "Women-Church Transforming Liturgy": power is shared among all participants, and symbols, gestures, texts, images, and words are used that emerge from *women's* ways of knowing; women are honored in all our diversity as imaging the divine, and women's bodies are regarded as vehicles



of divine revelation; and women's mutual solidarity is valued and strengthened within these rituals for overcoming violence. Equally impressive and instructive is the self-critique included with each ritual—a rare element in traditional liturgical work, and a means by which vision breeds ever more exquisite vision.

*Women at Worship* is an invaluable resource not only for the insights it reveals, but also for the searching questions it shapes. For example, those who long for worship that is profoundly beautiful, relevant, *and* responsible must always wrestle with the questions raised by one thoughtful writer, Patricia Malarcher: "Apart from whether these rituals are liturgies, are they worship? If so, to whom, or to what?" A final segment rounds out the volume by addressing still other important "Lingering Questions": how the image of Jesus can be valued and understood in Christian womanist worship (Delores Williams) and new understandings of feminist prayer (Eileen King).

Walton and Procter-Smith have presented in these pages a bold and potentially transformative ritual community. We who share their conviction that liturgy must indeed be "women's work" owe a debt of gratitude to all these women of spirit and creativity who are leading us into a new ritual language and a new day!

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Bailey, Raymond, ed. *Hermeneutics for Preaching: Approaches to Contemporary Interpretations of Scripture*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992. Pp. 223. \$15.95.

This is an important volume because of its strong insistence on the necessity of executing the hermeneutical task in the preparation and delivery of the sermon. The insistence rules out a naive, "I simply preach the Bible." Following an introductory chapter, "Hermeneutics: A Necessary Art," by the contributing editor Raymond Bailey, there follow seven chapters, each describing a hermeneutical model, putting the model into practice in the interpretation of a biblical passage, issuing in a sermon on the passage exegeted, and concluding with a brief reflection on the whole process. The seven models described and put to use are as follows: historical, canonical, literary, rhetorical, African-American, philosophical, and theological.

The format of these chapters is well conceived. Besides Bailey, six other writers contribute an essay and a sermon each. As is often the case in such collections, there is an uneven quality in the contributions. James Earl Massey executes the intention of the format most successfully with an excellent discussion of African-American preaching and an equally excellent

example of the hermeneutical perspective put into practice in the sermon. One hopes his review of black preaching might impact all preaching.

The other sermons disappoint. Even though the volume as a whole and the individual contributions evidence a familiarity with hermeneutical theory and practice from Schleiermacher to Gadamer and Ricoeur, one fails to find the best insights of the respective models becoming fruitful in the sermons. Rather, the sermons for the most part smack of a kind of individualistic pietism that could be preached with little regard to the interpretive models set forth.

The idea of the volume is excellent; the call to hermeneutical consciousness and responsibility imperative; the format is well conceived; the concrete execution is disappointing.

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Spring Lake, MI

Clouse, Bonnidell. *Teaching for Moral Growth: A Guide for the Christian Community—Teachers, Parents, and Pastors*. Wheaton: BridgePoint, 1993. Pp. 416. \$14.99.

How can teachers, parents, and pastors teach so that moral growth is likely to occur? This is the question that Bonnidell Clouse, writing from an explicitly evangelical perspective, addresses in this instructive "guide for the Christian community." She brings her experience "as a professor of psychology in a state university, as well as a parent, Sunday School teacher, and minister's wife" to the task of "integrating psychology and Christian belief as these disciplines impact an understanding of how moral growth takes place." What results is an interesting, informative, and readable *basic* introduction to psychological theories of moral growth that suggests some practical guidelines for promoting moral growth.

Clouse begins by examining the strengths and weaknesses of two "traditional" approaches to moral growth, storytelling (chapter 1) and character education (chapter 3). She also includes in this section a discussion of a "biblical approach" to moral growth (chapter 2) in which she presents briefly her understanding of what the Bible says about *morality*, *values*, and *moral growth*. On the last point, she claims that the Bible reveals four complementary means of moral growth: conflict, action, knowledge, and potential. This fourfold understanding of the means of moral growth provides the framework for Clouse to examine and appropriate the insights of four different psychological perspectives on moral growth in the remainder of the book.

Each of the four psychological approaches she discusses focuses on one of

the four biblical means of moral growth. *Psychoanalysis* stresses growth by moral *conflict*; *learning* psychology, growth by moral *behavior*; *cognitive* psychology, growth by moral *reasoning*; and *humanistic* psychology, growth by moral *potential*. Two chapters are given to each psychological perspective, the first a basic and readable introduction, followed by a chapter that draws "guidelines for teachers, parents, and pastors."

The book closes with a final chapter in which Clouse critically compares and contrasts the four psychological perspectives with her understanding of Christian belief. Her discussion of the difference between therapy and conversion is quite suggestive.

The major strength of the book lies in its clear presentation of each of the four major psychological perspectives. The chapters read like well-honed introductory lectures to a class of college undergraduates. One delightful feature is the inclusion of informative and entertaining biographical sketches of the major theorists (Freud, Bettelheim, Skinner, Piaget, Kohlberg, and Rogers). For example, concerning Freud we learn that he was a favored child who was given his own room, while the other eight children shared a room, and that four of his sisters died in concentration camps during the Holocaust.

The basic, introductory nature of Clouse's presentation of the psychological theories is not without its drawbacks, however. It leads to an unfortunate lack of in-depth critical reflection on, and integration of, the different psychological perspectives. The most significant critical dialogue goes on in Clouse's final chapter. The problem is that the practical implications and guidelines of chapters 5, 7, 9, and 11 do not fully reflect the nuances later developed. Practical implications are drawn from each theory separately, rather than from a critically constructed, comprehensive theory of human moral development.

In addition, Clouse is either ignorant of or uninterested in the work of practical theologians who are not evangelicals. For example, the role of storytelling and narrative is discussed without any reference to the work of Hauerwas, McClendon, Krytch and others; cognitive approaches to moral development without reference to Fowler, Parks, and Dykstra; psychoanalytic approaches without reference to Browning, Loder, Hiltner, and others. Clouse has cut herself off from a whole corpus of insightful reflection on the integration of theology and psychology that could have added additional critical depth to her work.

Finally, some of the practical guidelines she draws are problematic. One of the most disappointing sections of the book is where Clouse accepts an equation of success with numbers and encourages the use of various reinforcers to bribe persons into attending church.

Even with the above limitations, I believe that this book is worth reading

for the clarity of Clouse's presentation and the importance of the topic she addresses. I found myself reflecting critically upon my own practice of parenting, teaching, and ministry numerous times during my reading. I suspect that all who read her book will do the same.

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Princeton, NJ

Verhey, Allen, and Stephen E. Lammers, eds. *Theological Voices in Medical Ethics*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1993. Pp. xiii + 256. \$17.99.

Originally published by the Park Ridge Center in *Second Opinion*, nine of the eleven essays that make up this volume focus on major theological voices in the field of medical ethics. Following Verhey and Lammers' introduction ("Rediscovering Religious Traditions in Medical Ethics"), the next nine essays analyze the work of prominent theologically oriented medical ethicists (eight Christian and one Jewish). The contributors of the essays, who are themselves well known in the field, and the ethicists they present are as follows: David H. Smith (on Paul Ramsey), Allen Verhey (on James M. Gustafson), Stephen E. Lammers (on Stanley Hauerwas), Lisa Sowle Cahill (on Richard McCormick), Gilbert Meilaender (on William F. May), Courtney Campbell (on James F. Childress), James G. Hanink (on Germain Grisez), Marc A. Gellman (on Immanuel Jakobovits), and Ron Hamel (on Bernard Haring). Martin E. Marty's essay, "On Medical Ethics and Theology: The Accounting of the Generations," concludes the collection.

Editing a volume such as this always requires making difficult decisions regarding selection. One can argue that certain key figures in the field of medical ethics are left out. Even Martin Marty points out in his concluding essay that Joseph Fletcher is "the most obvious missing candidate." Marty also mentions Jewish scholars (J. David Bleich, Moshe Tendler, David Feldman, and Seymour Siegler) as well as the Roman Catholic scholar Charles Curran as obvious omissions. One would not, however, argue that any of the theological voices that are included should have been left out. Although there are no clearly identified criteria for selection, the essays represent a variety of voices and are in themselves good choices.

In addition to describing and evaluating each ethicist's contribution to the field of medical ethics, each essay also summarizes and analyzes that ethicist's approach to theology and ethics in general. Hence, the book can serve a variety of purposes. It can, of course, serve as required reading for courses that focus on the contribution of theological voices to medical



ethics, especially those that emphasize particular authors and issues pertaining to methodology. If not used as assigned reading in such a course, it could provide a wealth of information for lecture material. Furthermore, since each essay focuses on the methodology of the ethicist described, the book is not necessarily restricted to courses on medical ethics but can serve other courses in Christian ethics that treat any of these particular figures. Finally, the book will prove of interest to chaplains, pastors, and lay people who wish to explore the field of medical ethics.

Prior to this volume Stephen Lammers (who is head of the religion department at Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania) and Allen Verhey (who is director of the Institute of Religion at the Texas Medical Center in Houston, Texas) edited an impressive collection of essays in a volume entitled *On Moral Medicine*. While this second excellent collection of essays can stand on its own, it can also be used as supplemental reading for this earlier volume. Whether used as supplemental reading or as a primary text, *Theological Voices in Medical Ethics* is a highly commendable volume for professors of Christian theological ethics and their students as well as for pastors and chaplains.

Nancy J. Duff  
Princeton Theological Seminary

Stone, Howard W. *Crisis Counseling*. Rev. ed. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993. Pp. 96. \$8.95.

Liberman, Aaron, and Michael J. Woodruff. *Risk Management*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993. Pp. 96. \$8.95.

Olsen, David C. *Integrative Family Therapy*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993. Pp. 96. \$8.95.

"Crime has increased. People are living on the edge. No one is safe. Modern existence seems to be a crisis waiting to happen." It is no doubt an ominous sign of the cultural and ecclesiastical times that the most significant change from the 1976 edition in Howard W. Stone's revised *Crisis Counseling* is the addition of a new chapter on "extreme interventions." Stone now intends to deliver the crisis counselor through the dangerous thicket of "threatened homicide, suicide, physical abuse, kidnapping or the taking of a hostage, a grisly death, an explosion at a plant, or the crash of a commercial airplane." If pastors now must encounter such immodest terrors as these, then ministry, Stone seems to say, has become an increasingly precarious vocation, life insurance actuarial tables notwithstanding.

Indeed, a concern for the labyrinthine dangers of ministry may well be one thread unifying the first three volumes of the Creative Pastoral Care



and Counseling Series, recently resuscitated by Fortress Press and co-edited by Stone, Professor of Pastoral Care and Pastoral Psychology at Brite Divinity School of Texas Christian University, and his former teacher Howard Clinebell, Emeritus Professor of Pastoral Psychology and Counseling of the School of Theology at Claremont. While perils of the pastoral pilgrim will hardly seem a novel theme to those familiar with scripture and church history, what is striking here are the contemporary delivery systems for such hazards. They are likely to manifest themselves not only in terrorist bombings and violent domestic disputes, if we take Stone's new chapter to heart, but in jungles of jurisprudence and forests of family systems theories as well, as the other two volumes suggest. More bluntly, ministers are being called upon to enter ever more threatening situations of need, armed with increasingly dizzying arrays of intervention approaches, with ever escalating prospects for being sued in so entering! For pastors who, in response to all this, find themselves whistling past the graveyard, these thin volumes seek, with varying degrees of success, to illuminate the way.

Stone's *Crisis Counseling* remains under the guise of its splashy new cover a solid, straightforward introduction to modern crisis-intervention theory. Grounded in the pioneering work of Harvard psychiatrist Gerald Caplan, Stone argues for the power of situational crises to bring persons, families, and larger systems face to face with their finitude. For good or for ill, crises weaken previously firm boundaries and routines, and make persons either painfully vulnerable or powerfully receptive to change. Stone guides his readers in chapters two and three through the precipitating and escalating dynamics of a crisis and, for many pastors, the by-now-familiar "A-B-C" method for intervention, that is, "A" = *Achieve* empathic contact; "B" = *Boil* down the problem to its essentials, avoiding quick advice or "bromides"; and "C" = *Cope* actively with the problem by developing a concrete plan of action. The new chapter four includes a helpful discussion of the unique dynamics of telephone counseling and important personal-safety precautions for counselors in high-risk situations. The book is replete with illustrations, including the whole of chapter five, which provides several extended case studies. Finally, chapter six concludes where Stone began, by reminding the church of its unique "location" for quick, flexible crisis intervention.

Aaron Liberman's and Michael J. Woodruff's *Risk Management* takes up the current American infatuation with courts of law as the institution *de rigueur* for conflict resolution, offering pastors and, in particular, professional pastoral counselors, reams of "quality assurance" standards, "compliance" checklists, and just-between-friends advice on how to protect one's counseling ministry from the litigious onslaught of disgruntled counselees. Liberman, a hospital and health administrator and an adjunct associate professor in the Department of Health Administration of the Medical Col-

lege of Virginia at Virginia Commonwealth University, and Woodruff, a lawyer practicing in Washington, D.C., lead their naive, pastorally inclined readers by a trembling hand into the brave new world of legalese. Here pastors come to discover, among other things, that their "product" is "mental health care" and that, as "sellers" of such products, they will want to ascertain whether they are covered under an umbrella liability policy.

Liberman and Woodruff recognize that *Nally v. Grace Community Church* (1988) awarded ministers the rather duplicitous distinction of exempting them from liability because, according to the courts, parish pastors do not provide a professional service when they counsel. The authors nevertheless notice, in a footnote to the same case, that pastoral counselors who charge a fee may be held to a higher standard. And they go on to warn all clergy that plaintiffs generally do not distinguish between pastors with counseling certification and those without, so pastors should be safe rather than sorry. The holy grail of such safety in this new world is *documentation*—the deliberate, careful keeping of counseling records. The nine brief chapters and five appendices provide in Levitical detail the ways and means of such documentation, with related topics of quality control, insurance coverage, performance reviews, etc. That pastoral counseling specialists probably need to read this kind of book seems a rather bleak commentary on the distance pastoral counseling has wandered into the secular therapeutic forest, with nary a clue to guide the way back.

In the series' third volume, *Integrative Family Therapy*, David C. Olsen, Executive Director of the Samaritan Counseling Center of the Capital Region, seeks to comfort anxious clergy afflicted by a confusing array of family systems literature in which technique is often stressed at the expense of integrative theory. Should pastors attempt to change behavior or communication? See people alone or in groups? Involve a third generation or not? Work with families short-term or long-term? Olsen begins to sift through the clutter by providing a brief history and discussing central concepts of the family therapy movement, then shifts to a succinct overview of seven key systems approaches, including structural, multigenerational, and interactional theories. He suggests that while each theory has its noted gurus, techniques, and emphases, taken together the theories need not be mutually exclusive. In the final few chapters, then, Olsen sets upon his constructive task of ordering or integrating the various theories into a unified assessment and treatment model. The result is less a new systems paradigm than a rather convincing, coherent map through the maze of existing options, making the book a welcome addition to a counselor's library.

The books in this series provide an eminently brief, practical introduction to their various topics, liberally sprinkled with case vignettes and step-by-step guides. Together, they constitute a litany to the complexity of

concerns confronting contemporary ministers. Because of the serious nature of these various concerns, it is regrettable that the series largely neglects recent trends—in the writings of James Poling, Pamela Couture, Donald Capps, Larry Graham, and others—which have sought to reestablish more concerted theological discussion into the pastoral-theological disciplines.

Robert Dykstra

The University of Dubuque Theological Seminary

Graham, Larry Kent. *Care of Persons, Care of Worlds: A Psychosystems Approach to Pastoral Care and Counseling*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992. Pp. 266. \$16.95.

This book is an important contribution to pastoral care and counseling. It is a major leap amid a growing number of recent smaller steps designed to deliver pastoral care from the individualistic model, fashioned around the psychotherapeutic process, to a wider view of the communal context of pastoral care. The major thesis of the book is succinctly stated: "To care for persons is to create new worlds; to care for the world is to build a new personhood. The destiny of persons and the character of the world are intertwined."

The theory and literature of pastoral care has broadened from the individual-centered models of twenty years ago to the moral, theological, and hermeneutic models of the 1980s. A more thoroughly systems model of care has been contemplated for some years. Graham's attempt is the most comprehensive systems-theoretical approach to appear to date.

Graham integrates several sources—process theology, liberation theology, systems theory from biology and psychology, and interactional approaches to psychology. Process theology gives Graham a way of representing the world, and God's relation to it, as a set of mutually influencing and internally related systems. Liberation theology provides him with a strong emphasis on justice and a social analysis that makes him sensitive to how wider social systems, kinship structures, economic institutions, and corporate bureaucracies create, or fail to create, a context of fairness for individuals. Systems theory provides him with tools for viewing human problems as "transactional impasses" involving poor communication, imbalances of power, and conflicts of values. Interactional psychological models make it possible to show the inner psychic experience of these transactional impasses. All in all, Larry Graham has assembled an impressive range of powerful analytic and normative resources for his expanded paradigm for pastoral care and counseling.

The book is divided into two parts. The first part is largely theoretical. It

introduces the key concepts of process theology and systems theory. These sections are heavily conceptual and are designed to educate the reader who may know little about these frameworks of analysis and understanding. The second part moves into a series of problem areas in pastoral care. These problem areas—sexual abuse, misuse of power, and values conflict—have been neglected in the literature of pastoral care. There is an intriguing chapter on resolving transactional impasses. There is an important and ground-breaking chapter on power—how to diagnose its abuse and discover strategies for its rearrangement. There is a chapter on conflict and one on diagnosing injustice and developing strategies for implementing justice.

The organization of the book around theory in the first part and practice in the second is traditional. It is, however, somewhat misleading in a book about pastoral care. Readers may wish they had been immersed from the beginning in pastoral situations that illustrate—indeed maybe even demand—the need for a systems and process-theology approach to human problems in a ministerial context. As it stands, we must wait for the second half of the book to see these conceptual systems come alive. And indeed they do.

There are other minor issues. Although the book is oriented to the social-system context of care, it still concentrates, for the most part, on the microsystems of family and other intimate relations. This is certainly justified because these are the first systems confronted from the perspective of pastoral care. However, larger social systems such as employment systems, economic systems, bureaucratic systems, and systems of technical rationality also greatly affect our family and neighborhood systems. Graham would not deny this observation, but he does little to illustrate how these larger systems impact our lives.

Ecclesiology is not an important topic for the book. The situation of the specialized pastoral psychotherapist still shines forth as the dominant ministerial context of the book. The ministerial roles of congregational leader, stimulator and agent of care, preacher, resident prophet, director of worship, and community leader are not prominent in this book. Hence, the pastoral care potential of these roles, even from a systems perspective, is not strongly developed. The reader wishes, at times, that Graham had studied congregations as systems and articulated his process-theology and systems-theory perspective from that vantage point.

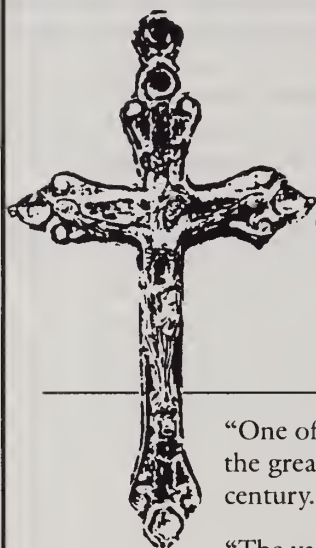
Finally, Graham takes a variety of normative positions, specially in the area of human sexuality. With laudable honesty, he states his point of view about both the causes and normative handling of issues in homosexuality, sexual violence, and sexual abuse. Most of his diagnoses and prescriptions are uncontroversial from the perspective of progressive or liberal readers. But that is the point: not all potential readers will be of these persuasions,

and there are counterarguments to the views Graham holds. For such readers, Graham should develop more intentional arguments supporting his analysis and his normative positions. As pastoral care moves into increasingly more controversial areas where the line between care and moral theology becomes difficult to draw, pastoral theologians must be willing to take responsibility for arguing, not just announcing, their normative positions.

*Care of Persons, Care of Worlds* is an important book. It will be most useful as a major text for advanced classes in pastoral care and counseling.

Don Browning  
University of Chicago Divinity School





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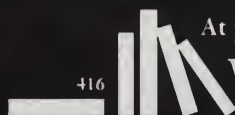
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